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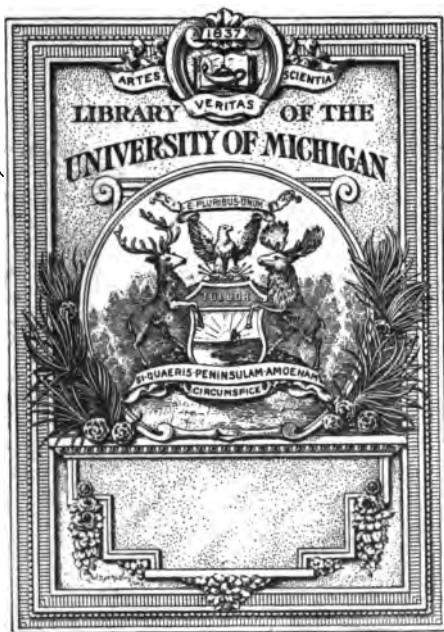
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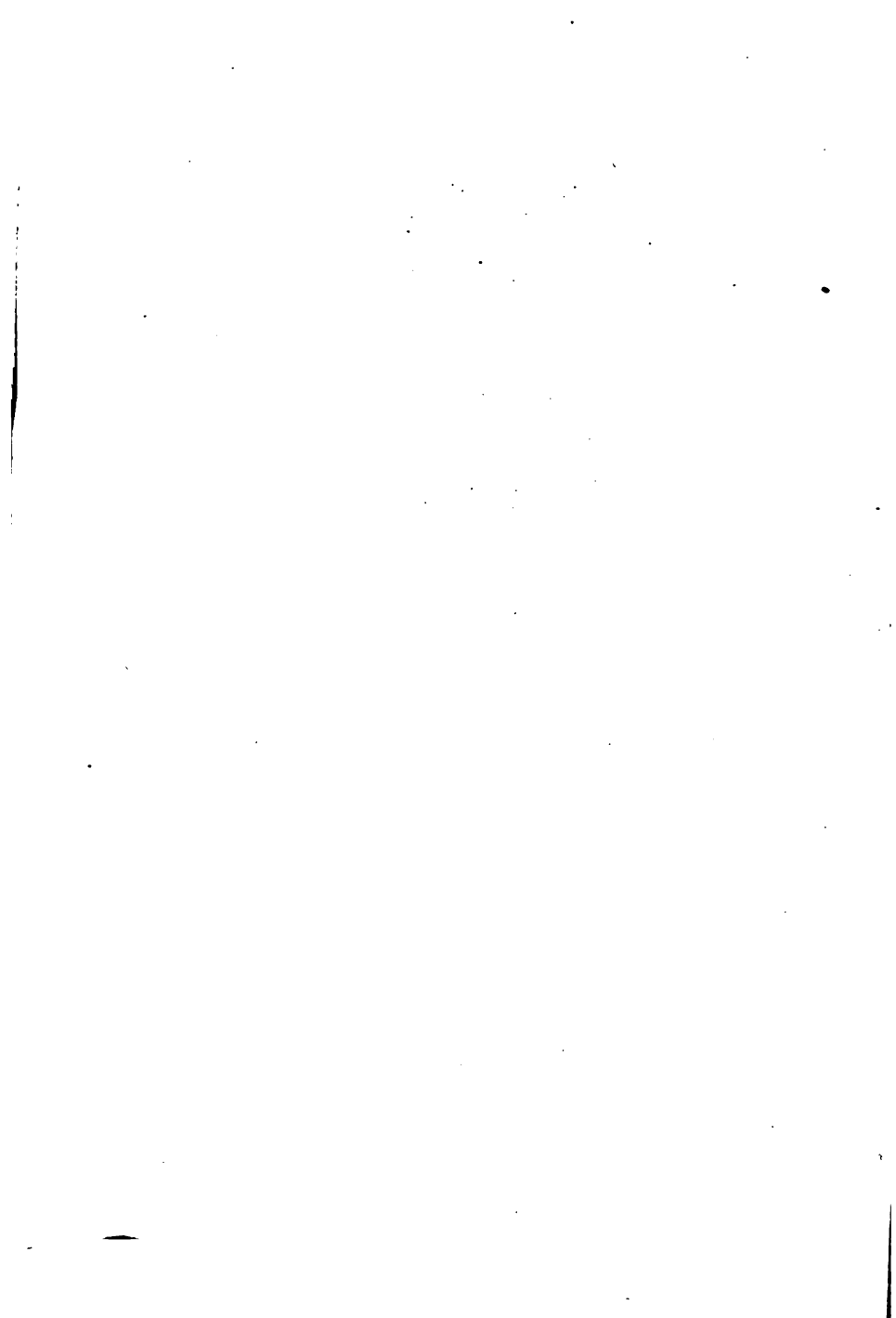
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THE COMET



THE COMET

A Play of Our Times

EDWARD DOYLE



BOSTON
RICHARD G. BADGER

The Gorham Press

1908

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CHARACTERS

RECTOR HIRAM WISDOM: The President of Eureka College and an Astronomer who makes the comet his special study.

FRED FOWLER: A student expelled from Eureka College for other than the cause assigned.

FRANK MERRIT: The victim of the hazing rite.

ED. PHELPS: The leader of the revolting students, and afterwards, "Rev. Madison Wells."

JACK BALDWIN: The chum of Ed. Phelps.

HANK SMITH: A student who personates "Miss Amelia."

JOHN HENRY PIGHEAD: The author of the "Resolutions" on account of which the Eureka Students wreak vengeance on the Liberal Club.

PAUL GARDNER: A poet with unquenchable love for his Alma Mater and the father of Rebecca Lovehart.

MR. BOND: The pillar of the Liberal Club, who has assigned everything to his wife, and who expects to be appointed the American Ambassador at London.

REV. MR. JONES: Rector Wisdom's Curate and "handy man" spiritually.

JIM BOWERS: An Alderman.

MRS. FOWLER BOND: The mother of the expelled student, a benefactress of Eureka College and a Social reformer who holds a mortgage on the Liberal Club.

MRS. HAUGHTYHEAD: A friend of Mrs. Bond.

REBECCA LOVEHART: The reputed daughter of Mr. Pighead, and Fred Fowler's betrothed.

DINAH: Mr. Pighead's servant.

THE WATCHMEN AND STUDENTS: Of Eureka College and the members and guests of the Liberal Club.

The Comet

ACT I

SCENE I

(The exterior of Eureka College by night. An owl-like hooting is heard coming from the windows which are dimly lighted. A watchman, sandy-whiskered, passes through the grounds, swinging a lantern. He staggers toward the stoop to get the coffee pot.)

Voices Singing.

To whit, to whool to whit, to whool!

We wise ones know a thing or two.

If Wisdom had our owlsh eyes

At night-time, he would be more wise

Than think all comets in the skies.

To whit, to whool to whit, to whool!

We wise ones know a thing or two.

WATCHMAN. *(drowsily).*

Don't they suppose a watchman wants to sleep?

If in a regular asylum, one

Would know the howlers were straight-jacketed

In padded cells, and comfortably rest;

But, hang it, not a wink here! not a wink!

(He lifts the coffee kettle to his mouth, but puts it down in disgust).

They might have sent us down a bigger pot.

(Two other watchmen, one brown-bearded, approach, making desperate attempts to walk steady and hold their lanterns.)

SECOND WATCHMAN. Is any of that College coffee left?

(They mumble to themselves and put down their lanterns. They stagger, and, endeavoring to help each other to stand, they tumble in a heap. They try to rise, but soon give up the struggle.)

Ed. Phelps appears with several students, all in masks.)

PHELPS. That coffee worked all right. Strip them and take

Their places, fellows, and patrol the grounds.

Eureka's discipline must be preserved.

(They disrobe the Watchmen and don the regalia. They remove the victims to the bushes and then patrol the grounds with exaggerated gravity. The College door is opened by Rev. Mr. Jones who descends the steps timidly. Phelps hides.)

MR. JONES. *(in approval of his own judgment in selecting them).*

That is the kind of watchmen! It were worth

The Rector's while to leave the telescope

To look at them. The students will not dare

(He is rushed upon by the Watchmen who poke their lanterns in his face.)

Watchmen! What do you mean?

WATCHMAN. *(drawing back).* Oh! It is you.

MR. JONES.

Yes, it is I. The Rector sent me down

To tell you, that in case of any trouble—

FIRST WATCHMAN. Leave that to us.

SECOND WATCHMAN. You bet!!

FIRST WATCHMAN.

If they attempt

Their funny work with us — don't be
around,

Not even at a window!

MR. JONES. But I must.

SECOND WATCHMAN.

Don't! Don't! Now, be advised. 'T is our
first time

In quelling a disturbance, and you know,
We might be nervous, as militia men
With Creedmore medals, like potato eyes,
All over them, for target excellence,—
And hit a head at which we do not aim.

MR. JONES. (*horrified*).

But Watchmen! surely you do not intend
To shed a drop of blood?

WATCHMEN. Not of our own.

MR. JONES. (*almost shrieking*).

You must not think of such a thing!!

WATCHMAN. Why not?

MR. JONES.

It would destroy the College for all time!
And, as I recommended you as men
Possessing judgment, *it would ruin me*,
For I am held accountable for you.

SECOND WATCHMAN.

What does the Rector want? To have us
stand

For targets, and to ring a bell, when struck?

MR. JONES.

No, No. He simply wants you to arrest
All the disturbers and imprison them
Until the morning.

WATCHMEN. All?

MR. JONES.

Yes, every one.
Remember, Watchmen, that on no account
Whatever, must the Rector be diverted
A single instant from the telescope
During the night.

FIRST WATCHMAN.

Say! Why does he not turn
His telescope from the disorderly stars,
Right down among his students?

SECOND WATCHMAN.

Good idea!

He would not then have any need of us.

MR. JONES (*gravely*).

Because the telescope is not constructed
For such a purpose.

SECOND WATCHMAN.

Oh! Indeed! I thought

That it was like a hose.

MR. JONES. No.

SECOND WATCHMAN. One can learn

Great things at College. I am not here
long.

MR. JONES.

Now, Watchmen, bear in mind what I told
you

Early this evening.

FIRST WATCHMEN. Yes,— not to imbibe.

MR. JONES. No.

SECOND WATCHMAN. Not to nap.

MR. JONES. No, No! To exercise
Uncommon vigilance, so that no harm
Shall come to Student Merritt.

FIRST WATCHMAN.

Oh, yes! Yes!

You told us that before.

MR. JONES.

Now, don't forget
To watch his windows, and if you should see
His light raised, or put out, haste to his
room.

SECOND WATCHMAN. You bet!

MR. JONES. If you discover anyone,
Arrest him on suspicion, but remember
On no account disturb the President.

WATCHMAN. All right, Sir!

MR. JONES.

Now, before I go, I want
To caution you. The College youth is sly,
Has all the cunning of the lunatic,
It grieves me much to say; so, if you catch
Any of them, don't mind how much they
plead,

Or what they may pretend —

WATCHMEN. Leave them to us.

MR. JONES.

But Watchmen! Did not two of you have
beards?

SECOND WATCHMAN. *(laughing)*.

The surest thing you know! But we have
plucked

Our faces cleaner than a Christmas turkey,
To see who could shave fastest — on a bet!
MR. JONES.

You should have shaved before you came
on duty.

(Mr. Jones reascends the steps and enters the College.)

FIRST WATCHMAN. Close shave.

SECOND WATCHMAN. You bet, but now we
own the grounds!

PHELPS. *(reappearing)*

Attention! Take your orders for the night.
Police the premises — give friendly tips
To the law-breakers, and grant them protection

In every undertaking. Forward, march! —
Hist! Order Second. Lift your lantern
flare

When moving round, so that the curious eye
May see that you are faithful to your trust.
First, circumspect "the wood-pile." Forward!
March!

(They march about, swinging their lanterns.

Enter six masked students who carry ladders, and, placing them against the building under Merritt's window, begin to ascend. The College door is opened by Mr. Jones who comes down the steps timidly.)

MR. JONES.

Those were suspicious noises. Watchmen!
Watchmen!

WATCHMAN. *(approaching)*. Seize him!
They grab Mr. Jones).

MR. JONES. (*amazed*). Watchmen!!

FIRST WATCHMAN. What brings you out?

MR. JONES. I heard strange noises.

WATCHMAN. We heard nothing strange.

MR. JONES. Look! Look!

What is that ladder doing there?

FIRST WATCHMAN. What ladder?

MR. JONES. There, with the men on it.

FIRST WATCHMAN. Where?

MR. JONES. There!! One, two,

Three, four, five, six, — arrest them!

FIRST WATCHMAN. Brother Cop,

Do you see any "ladder?" Or "six men?"

SECOND WATCHMAN.

A ladder! Where? I don't see even a rung.

MR. JONES.

What! Don't you see them climbing up the building?

SECOND WATCHMAN. No!

FIRST WATCHMAN. (*Pulling Mr. Jones*).

Come along! We can't climb buildings after

The monkeys of your over-heated brain.

MR. JONES. What do you mean?

SECOND WATCHMAN.

Now, come along! You talk

Just like a disappointed politician,

They call an "out" — "Goo-goo" — "Mug-wump" — "reformer —"

Gazabo who is always seeing ladders

Set up against the public Mint at night,

And every rival rascal on a rung.
Your malady is ladder on the brain.

MR. JONES.

But Watchman! Why do you lay hands on me?

SECOND WATCHMAN.

"Because we know the College youth is sly,
Has all the cunning of a lunatic,
It grieves us much to say."

MR. JONES. I am no youth,

But Curate at the Rector's Little Church.

SECOND WATCHMAN. What brings you here?

MR. JONES. My duty to the Rector.

SECOND WATCHMAN.

Your duty! Humbug! Is it not enough
To be the Rector's drudge in parish work?
Why do you also do his dirty work
About the College, spying in and out?

MR. JONES. I do no dirty work.

SECOND WATCHMAN. Then you are not

The curate, Mr. Jones, but student, trying
To trick us watchmen, but it will not work

MR. JONES.

I am the curate, and besides, I have
Heart trouble; kindly let me go.

FIRST WATCHMAN. "Don't mind

How much he pleads, or what he may pretend,"

Those are our orders.

MR. JONES. Come up to the Rector,
And he will satisfy you who I am.

SECOND WATCHMAN.

That settles it! you are not Curate Jones,

For he instructed us most positively,

On no account *whatever*, to disturb

The Rector till the morning. Come along.

(First and Second Watchmen force Mr. Jones into the College and shut the door after them. The Third and Fourth Watchmen walk up and down the grounds, swinging their lanterns and oblivious of what happens about them. Students appear at Merritt's window and descend the ladder with him blindfolded, gagged and with his arms bound by the belfry rope. Other students enter with an "infernal machine" and additional paraphernalia of the Eureka hazing rite.)

PHELPS. Where is Fred Fowler?

SMITH. Not yet back from town.

PHELPS. The shirk!

SMITH. Paul Gardner's guest to-night.

BALDWIN. Two dreamers!

SMITH. Fred's mother, I believe, is to endow
Eureka with a Chair of Poetry,
And Gardner sent for Fred to talk it over.—
Hang me! Fred told me to keep mum on
that.

(Two huge rattlesnakes are seen and heard crawling along. Merritt is placed on the infernal engine and the Students gather around him.)

PHELPS.

Attach the belfry rope around his legs
As well as neck, so that the more he kicks,
The louder will the tocsin toll for help,—
An object lesson, verily, of Justice
Tempered with Mercy! Justice, for no
man

Is better than another at Eureka,
 Nor greater than the Law which we uphold,
 Like Honor, let the cost be what it may.
 Have you unsheathed your bowies?

SEVERAL VOICES. Aye.

PHELPS.

Whet them.

(They whet their knives and Merritt trembles.)

Now plunge them in the heart of man, or
 beast,

That dares profane the precinct of our rite.

(They move off grating their blades.)

Rise, serpents! Ye that guard the chastity
 Of our procedure! Look this mortal
 through.

(The Serpents rear and glare in Merritt's face.)

Now, lest there lurk an eye that ought not
 see,

Glide through the grasses, soft as light
 through dew.

(They drop and glide away.)

Wouldst thou be worthy of Eureka? Nod.

(Merritt nods affirmatively.)

STUDENTS. *(In chorus).* Brother!

*(They ungag Merritt and remove the bandage
 from his eyes.)*

PHELPS.

Be philosophic, then, brave brother,
 Under all circumstances. On thy breast
 I pin a diamond, to typify
 Philosophy that, with unbroken smile,
 Meets each and all vicissitudes of life.

(Puts it on his breast).

Keep thou it ever on thy breast. Swear!

STUDENTS. (*in chorus*). Swear!

MERRITT. (*tremblingly*.) I swear to keep it
ever on my breast.

PHELPS.

Here, at Eureka, we demean no man,
But make him one of our Democracy
Upon the pledging of his heart and soul
To high ideals. We give thee this pin,
With right to pluck it from thee, if thou
cringe

To a brute force throughout thy college life,
And thereby make thy Alma Mater blush.

PHELPS.

Our ritual, we begin with awe; heed well.
The Diamond, immortal soul,
Shines in the part, as in the whole;
It glows with love of Truth and Scorn of
guile.

Impinge this precious stone to pieces,
Its luminosity increases,
And ground to dust, it shows its infinite
smile.

BALDWIN.

Hence, Neophyte of old Eureka,
If thou wouldst be a bold truth seeker,
Ungear thy feet of haste and think awhile.
The Greek Aurora, that is cast
Upon our sky from the frozen Past,
Glow with strange rites no sage thought
infantile.

SMITH. Know that the path to glory lies
Through swamps and woods 'neath hailing
skies,

And that all must advance in Indian File;
And, Neophite, recall to mind
That Fate blindfold's us from behind,
Like Love, to turn us round and see us
smile.

ALL THE STUDENTS. (*solemnly*)

O Neophite! If word be spoken
Touching this rite, regard our token
The burning, serpent eye of doom most
vile.

The grass shall move as with the breeze
And charm the birds from air and trees;
Laocoön shall perish for his guile.

PHELPS.

Stand here the whole night long, like Soc-
rates,
That all the stars may center on thy head,
Their influence for good.

BALDWIN. Meanwhile, prepare
For Death, O Brother!

ALL THE STUDENTS. Death!

PHELPS. For any moment
May be the crack of doom.

ALL THE STUDENTS. For any moment
May be the crack of doom.

PHELPS.

Pass through it stout
Of spirit, and, upon the other side,
Look back immortal with contempt of pain.

BALDWIN AND SMITH.

Look back immortal with contempt of pain.

ALL THE STUDENTS.

Look back immortal with contempt of pain.

(Phelps and his comrades enter the College and many students at the windows, unseen, sing, crowing the first and fifth lines like an old rooster and the end of the fourth like a young one.)

Ho — Ho! Ho — Ho — Ho — Ho! Ho
— Ho!

What secret do we roosters crow?
That amorous Morn doth slyly throw
His arms around Night's neck. Ho — Ho!
Ho — Ho! Ho — Ho — Ho — Ho! Ho
Ho!

Ho — Ho! Ho — Ho — Ho — Ho! Ho
— Ho!

What secret do we roosters crow?
That Night, although she cries, "No, no!"
Melts in his arms. Ho — Ho! Ho — Ho!
Ho — Ho! Ho — Ho — Ho — Ho! Ho —
Ho!

(After a silence of a few seconds, an explosion tilts the barrel on which Merritt stands, and he swings in the air.)

(The bell tolls furiously and the college windows become dark.)

(The Watchmen, awakened, crawl from under the bushes and stare bewildered.)

SCENE 2

Exterior of the College in the morning. The students are in groups, some pensive and other gesticulating. The ladders are lying on the ground near the wreck of the infernal machine).
STUDENTS. (*humming*).

Oh, why — Oh, why — Oh, why, — Oh, why!
We sophs as well as seniors cry,
And all Eureka swells the note —
Why pick out Fowler for the goat?
Why pick out Fowler, when no owl, or
Even a rooster, but remote?

(*Rev. Mr. Jones opens the College door and addresses the Students from the stoop*).

MR. JONES. (*gasping*).

The President directs me to advise
The Students not to congregate out here;
That any demonstration on their part,
At the departure of the one expelled,
Will be construed as proof most positive
Of their complicity in his offence.

STUDENTS. (*varying in intonation*).

Bow — wow, bow-wow.

MR. JONES.

The President, moreover,
Directs me to admonish every student,
Without exception, to repair to Chapel
Immediately. None will be excused.

STUDENTS. Bow-wow-wow-wow- Bow-wow —
Bow-wow-wow-wow-wow!

(*Mr. Jones re-enters the College, followed by several students, whereupon the others hiss.*)

ONE STUDENT. (*turning around*).

Fellows! I disapprove of rioting.

PHELPS. A future Justice of the Peace! Three
boos.

STUDENT.

Hold on there, Phelps! If any one of you
Cares to discuss this matter, like a man,
Call "time!"

PHELPS.

Two seconds — Rector Wisdom, one
And Curate Jones the other.

STUDENTS. (*laughing*). Good!

PHELPS. Three cheers

For an Eurekaian who can buck a crowd,
And show the world that Bill, the goat, the
mascot,

Dear as the pennon to Eureka's Nine
And as inseparable —

STUDENTS. Aye! —

PHELPS. Does not

Monopolize Eureka's moral courage!

(*They cheer and laugh as the Student retires.*)

BALDWIN. It is an outrage to expel a man

Without a trial. Is Fowler guilty?

STUDENTS. (*thunderingly*). No!

PHELPS.

Fred was not here at all, yet he is doomed
To vindicate the Rector's vigilance
And Brutus sense of justice. O Ye Gods!
No wonder that ye are invisible;
Ye draw your faces from the world, to hide
Your laughter at the deeds of little men,
Who ape your virtues.

STUDENTS. Good! Demonsthenes!
(They cheer).

PHELPS.

Why roam through history except to catch
 The spirit of the heroes of the Past,
 And, mounting, lead to battle for the Right?
 A Magna Charta for Eureka!

STUDENTS. Aye, Aye!

PHELPS. Let us demand it!

STUDENTS. Ay! Ay! Ay!

(The students cheer and become more boisterous on the appearance of Fred Fowler with a valise.)

STUDENTS. A speech! A speech!

FOWLER. *(mounting the wreck).*

My valedictory.

Farewell, dear fellows! for my doom is
 sealed;

The gibbet of expulsion is erected;

The noose and weight adjusted, and the
 cap

Of blackest distance will, ere long, be drawn
 Across my eyes from these, my fondest
 scenes.

(The curate opens the door and passes through the grounds. Rector Wisdom appears, and there is a hush among the Students.)

The Clergy, too, attend me to the Scaffold
 And fervently exhort me to confess,
 And be contrite, and give their pious eyes
 Some earnest of my better life hereafter.

RECTOR WISDOM. *(on the stoop).*

It ill becomes Eureka's President

To argue with his Students, on a theme
Affecting discipline; but I am pained
Beyond endurance, by the gravity
Of your rebellion. I repeat rebellion!
I made it plain, I thought, in my remarks
In chapel, that, if I could read our times,
Their trend runs counter to our Country's
aim,

And that it rests with College men, above
All others, to prevent our Country's boast
From being made a by-word and a jest
For all succeeding time.

STUDENTS. Plain! Plain as day!

RECTOR WISDOM.

I made it plain, I thought, that it devolves
Upon Eureka Students, most of all,
To teach the wealthy, that they form a part
Of our Republic, only in so far
As they contribute to its character
As Leader of the Nations unto Right,
By noble thought and patriotic deed!

(Applause)

I made it plain, I thought, that it devolves
On you, as true Eureka students, to translate
Into the common speech of daily life,
Your Country's loftiest ideals, writ
By Freedom with your father's sacred blood;
But I have been mistaken.

STUDENTS. No! No! No!

WISDOM. *(appreciating the Students applause,
but not showing his pleasure).*

I made it plain, I thought, that it devolves
Upon the cultured classes in our land,

To get the races by degrees together
To talk their grievance over, in a voice
As gentle as a woman's; but what is it
That you have done? *Have sundered them*

STUDENTS. No! No!

RECTOR WISDOM.

I say, have sundered them. You represent
The cultured class, and therefore kill all
hope.

The future does look dark. What will be-
come

Of our fair Country, when the White and
Black,

A stranger to each other's just desires,
Rise to the awful height of all rank growths?
There is no education in the world

Like human contact for mankind's advance;
All differences, then, adjust themselves;

But when two races are estranged by hate,
They grow so deaf to one another's rights,
That it soon comes to pass that either has
To use the trumpet of artillery

In order to be heard at all. Are you

With me in hindering that catastrophe?

STUDENTS. We are! We are!

FOWLER. But, Sir, I fail to find

The application of your eloquence;

We have been always of your mind on that.

Have we not, fellows?

STUDENTS. Aye, aye — aye, Aye — aye!

RECTOR WISDOM. (*looking at his watch and
indicating by his voice his indignation at the
Students demonstration.*)

It lacks three minutes of the time for Chapel.
Let each and every one be in his seat
Before the tolling of the bell.

FRANK MERRITT. (*appearing with his arm in a sling*).

Good Rector.

RECTOR WISDOM. Well?

FRANK MERRITT.

I have doubts, Sir — I have serious doubts—
That this young gentleman was one of them.
I recollect, Sir, that about dusk-time
When I was shutting down my windows, Sir,
He was the one I saw a hurrying out,
With both hands on his forehead, thus as
though

In sore distress.

(*Forgetting his sore arm, he lifts both hands to his forehead, but abbreviates his illustration with a wince.*)

RECTOR WISDOM. (*re-entering the College*).

The hospital, or home.

FRANK MERRITT. (*following Rector Wisdom*).

Don't send me home, Sir! Though I'd
rather go

Than have the wrong man —

(*The door closes.*)

PHELPS.

Fellows give three cheers

For Merritt. He is worthy of Eureka.

(*They cheer and the bell begins to toll. Several enter the College.*)

FOWLER. There goes my funeral knell.

PHELPS. 'T is mine as well.

BALDWIN. Mine too.

HANK SMITH. And mine..

FOWLER.

One victim is enough.

Why have a hecatomb? Besides, my fate
Points out a moral for Eureka men.

The Merritt hazing was the only one
I had no hand in during all the term;
The innocent is sure to suffer.

STUDENTS. Ha!

FOWLER.

What does it matter? I can summon up
Philosophy that, with unbroken smile,
Meets each and all vicissitudes of life.

PHELPS. Is Fowler guilty?

STUDENTS. No.

PHELPS. Shall he be made our scapegoat?

STUDENTS. No!

PHELPS.

Is it Lynch Law, or not,
To bring a great Eureka's college life
To an abrupt and ignominious end
Without a trial?

STUDENTS. Lynch Law!

PHELPS.

And is Lynch Law
A whit more sacred in the Rector's hands,
Than in the hands of the most brutish mob?

STUDENTS. No! not a bit! The same!

PHELPS. Come, tell him that!

FOWLER. No use, Phelps! He would answer
like the mob.

I go now, and alone.

PHELPS.

Not on your life!

What say you, gentlemen? Shall we skulk
back

Like dastards, and let Fowler face alone

The consequences of an act, not his?

STUDENTS. No!

PHELPS.

Or, shall every man go out with him

And let Eureka drift, keel up, down stream?

(They applaud)

In other words, are we to "hang together,
Or separately?"

STUDENTS. Hang together.

PHELPS. Come.

*(Phelps, Baldwin and other students lift Fowler
on their shoulders, and, as they bear him about
the grounds, all thunder out the College cry.)*

Eureka! Ha! Ha! Ha! Eureka! Ha! Ha!

Eureka! Eureka! Eureka! Ha! Ha! Ha!

(The tolling of the bell dies faintly.)

ACT II

SCENE I

A parlor in a surburban hotel. About the room are scattered the signs of cobblers, butchers, grocers, fortune-tellers, doctors, sextons, manicures and seamstresses. The Students ceaselessly move about the room with the grace of fishes in a tank at the Aquarium.)

SMITH. He is all right!

BALDWIN. Who is all right?

STUDENTS. (*in chorus.*) Fred Fowler.

(*A pounding on the ceiling is heard.*)

HANK SMITH. Say, who has pluck and grit and nerve enough

To tell the ancient girl with hatchet face,
Upon the floor above, not to crack nuts
By jumping with both feet on them and missing,—

That it disturbs our study?

STUDENTS. Aye — Aye — Aye!

FOWLER. Respect antiquity.

HANK SMITH. Antiquity!

STUDENTS. Here!

PHELPS. Strike the gong. Things here are getting dull.

Oh! for a cane-rush, or an expedition
To the North Pole.

FOWLER. Or war worth fighting — one
To teach all barbarous tribes throughout
the globe,
Christian or Turk, that all Humanity
Is territory sheltered by our flag;

That butchery must cease throughout the
world;

That, having ended human slavery,
"Old Glory" has a mission from on high
To stop the slaughter of the smiling babe,
The pale, crazed mother, weak, defense-
less sire,

All places on the habitable globe;
Whether where Morning, like an animal,
After a run for life through desert dust,
Approaches hot with thirst and snatches up
The blood in long throatfuls; or where the
snow

Turns ghastly as it falls, and longs to melt,
And earth itself, within its heart of hearts,
Murmurs against high Heaven that, like
the snow,

It cannot also melt and be no more.

*(The Students applaud and the pounding on
the ceiling is repeated. Fowler, smiling, points
up as he quotes from Whittier.)*

"Who harms a hair of yon gray head —

STUDENTS. *(in chorus)*.

"Dies like a dog. March on, he said."

SMITH. Demosthenes will now oblige.

STUDENT. *(in chorus)*. He will.

PHELPS. What will it be?

FOWLER.

Give us Paul Gardner's latest.

On Freedom.

PHELPS. "Freedom? 'T is intelligence

Aloof from harm and hamper, grandly
circling

Its native, sun-lit peaks, the highest hopes
Heaved from the heart of man upon the
earth,

In ranges long as time and soul endure.
I look aloft and harken. I can hear
The echo of the eagle's youthful cry
In the high heaven, but view the azure void
Of his auroral, broadening spread of wing.
Where is the bird of Morning? Has the fog
Of Demagogy barred his upward flight?
Is he, the phantom in its density,
Pendant between two awful rocks — The
one,

The dooming of the millions yet to be,
Because their race, a creeping infant, born
Of Savagry and Thralldom yesteryear,
Is far behind the Titan, strong with years
And grown so nimble-footed with the arts
That, since he burst from darkness, he has
kept

Abreast with Morning; and the other rock,
The dooming of the Titan to fall back,
Little by little, for the infant's growth
To catch up to a marriageable age
And sap him, then, of all his god-like
strength,

His brain of high ideals, and his heart,
A very Sun in driving out the cold
And darkness from all regions of the globe,
So that, though long he ran abreast with
Morn,

He will be overtaken by the Night?

Soar, bird of Light! Oh, pierce the fog, but
dash

'Gainst neither rock to reel back with
crushed wing,

Then flutter in the swamp, the bullfrogs'
jest,

And mount no more to mate admiring Morn,
Who hails thee grandest of all forms, be-
holden

By him in boundless, constellated space."

BALDWIN. He is all right.

SMITH. Who is all right?

STUDENTS. (*Shouting*).

Phelps — Gardner!

BALDWIN. Both are all right.

PHELPS. Hank Smith will now oblige.

SMITH. (*Imitating Rector Wisdom's intonation
and manner.*)

Young men! allow me to assure you, that while I am the President, Eureka College cannot be converted into an asylum for the dumb. I have asked you collectively and individually, for information as to the participants in the hazing last night, but not one of you will speak. Recognizing more fully than you, that expulsion from College means to most young men, the blasting of their lives, I admonish you most earnestly to answer truthfully the questions put to you, no matter whom the information may hurt. You may then continue your college career with the exalted consciousness that you are promoters of law and order, and to that extent, are worthy citizens of your Country.

(The Students applaud uproariously. A news-boy in the distance shouts "Extra," whereupon Fowler hastens out, followed by Baldwin.)

FOWLER. An extra.

SMITH. What about an extra drink?

PHELPS.

Good! extra Irish whiskey, warranted
To have no scorpion, lizard, toad, nor snake
In its delirium tremens, boys, for mine.

SMITH. Mine, too. Fetch it for all of us.

Exit.

A STUDENT. Mine, water.

SMITH.

Bwoo! Even the thought of water gives me
spasms.

I took a look once with a microscope
Into pure water — Bwoo! a little drop,
And yet it held such monsters by the million
Crawling and intertwisting — Bwoo! Bwoo!
Bwoo!

I have had hydrophobia ever since. —
I say, hang dullness. Has no one brought
gloves?

STUDENT. No.

SMITH. What a strange, strange, social function!

STUDENTS. Ha!

SMITH. Come then, old man, bare knuckles.

STUDENT. I don't mind,

Provided that we daub our fists with ink
To keep a tally.

SMITH. Excellent idea!

(They ink their knuckles and spar dexterously, each marking the other's brow, chin and both cheeks. Meanwhile, two other Students approach.)

A STUDENT. Collar and elbow, come.

STUDENT. Two out of three.

(They wrestle and are well matched. The wrestlers collide with the sparrers and are flung against a bric-a-brac table that comes down with a crash. They stop their fooling.)

SMITH. Another item on our bill. — Time!

Second sparrer. Time!

(They continue the bout.)

A STUDENT. A snooze for me, but first a drink is coming.

(Fred Fowler enters with a newspaper and all gather about him, frequently interrupting his reading with their laughter.)

The Extra, Fellows! All about us! listen!

Rector Wisdom's Fanaticism!

Expels Champion Oarsman Fowler.

Athletics Doomed at Eureka.

The Students in Revolt.

Curate Jones' Testimony.

Eureka's President a Modern Jephtha.

(Special to the World Enlightener.)

Your correspondent called at Eureka College at two A.M. this morning. President Wisdom was up in the Observatory, but could not be induced to come down from his perch. He sent word by the curate, the Rev. Mr. Jones, that he had no statement to make further than that the new comet had a curled up tail, like a squirrel.

Your correspondent explained that he was not the astronomer of your staff, but the sporting editor who had come for the full details of the recent hazing which, as it has resulted in the expulsion of Fred Fowler, the champion amateur oarsman of America and the peerless Captain of Eureka's lightning crew, was a matter of absorbing interest to college men throughout the civilized world. Would the President be so kind as to state whether or not the expulsion of young Fowler for such a triviality as his complicity in the hazing rite, was an announcement that the policy of Eureka's Faculty hereafter would be to do away with athletics altogether?

The Curate refused to take up the message and attempted to shut the door. Your correspondent put out his foot opportunely, and, pushing through the door ajar, got close enough to the Curate to see that he had a scald of freckles on his face and that the hue of his hair was sorrel. He had the sullen askance look of a mule with ears on the drop as a signal to his heels.

The following conversation then took place:

REPORTER. Is it true that the Faculty instigated, or, at any rate, connived at the hazing of Frank Merritt in order to deter other colored youths from applying at Eureka College for matriculations, as charged in the Liberal Club Resolution, secured by the World Enlightener in advance of their adoption and published this morning in no other paper, except they have been stolen from the World Enlightener's press.

CURATE. No sir. That is an unwarranted falsehood.

REPORTER. Was every precaution taken to prevent the hazing of the Colored Student?

CURATE. Every possible precaution was taken. The President warned the young men in a most solemn and impressive way at Chapel. He told them that, if this young man was subjected to any indignity whatever, the one to whom the least circumstantial evidence would point as the culprit, would not merely be suspended, but expelled.

REPORTER. Could any instigation be more provocative to an outbreak, than such a threat to high-spirited young men? Have the Faculty forgotten human nature that they once knew by heart?

CURATE. The Faculty did all in their power to prevent the hazing of the young man. They employed additional watchmen to patrol the grounds under his window, and, as I recommended the watchmen, I felt it my duty to see that they did theirs.

REPORTER. Well! If you saw to it that the Watchmen did their duty, how did it happen that there was any hazing at all?

CURATE. The Students made the watchmen drunk, changed clothes with them, and *then arrested me.*

REPORTER. Arrested you! Did they put you through the third degree?

CURATE. They shut me up in a dark room.

REPORTER. Would the success of the Students not imply what is preposterous, namely, that they have more brains than the Faculty? Now, my good man, is it not more reasonable to believe that the Faculty winked at the hazing, than that they were outwitted by their "knee-highs" mentally?

CURATE. It is not more reasonable, Sir, for the Rector never winks, day or night. He loves the Colored people too much to wink at an indignity to one of them. Why, he once told me that, if he had a daughter, he would rather officiate at her marriage to a colored youth of good education, than see her wedded by a bishop to one of the many young men of social distinction, whom he could name; for then, her happiness would be more assured.

REPORTER. Did he say that?

CURATE. Yes, but you won't print that!

REPORTER. Why not? It is the raciest thing that you have said.

CURATE. I entreat you, sir, don't print that! I have great trouble with my heart, and it would bring a spell on, if you put my name in the paper, saying what the Rector might not like!

Your correspondent was deeply touched by the Curate's appeal, but, of course, his duty to the public is paramount.

The dominant sentiment of a public man, no matter to whom, or under what circumstances, it is expressed, *is news too important* not to be made public property. That Eureka's President could expel the peerless Captain of the

College crew, just for a little fooling with a Negro, so as to make him feel at home, would be inexplicable, if not for the Curate's revelation of Rector Hiram Wisdom's fanaticism to the extent that he would sacrifice even his daughter.

(The students laugh uproariously and Fowler muses aloud, pressing his head with his hands).

How can I put the Rector to the test?

I have a notion he is insincere.

STUDENTS. Bow wow!

FOWLER.

I mean just what I say. Of course,
He had sincerity sometime or other,
But lost it on the road, and, up to date,
Has never missed it,

STUDENTS. Wow!

FOWLER.

The world believes
He has it, so it lets him pass unsearched;
But I shall challenge him some day or other,
As sure as fate, and make him show the
goods.

(Baldwin enters, holding with both hands a tray, piled up with glasses which the Students take. He has in his mouth a card and grimaces to Fred Fowler.)

FOWLER. *(Taking the card from Baldwin's mouth.)*

Paul Gardner wants a word with me down stairs.

(Fowler goes out and Phelps appears with a demijohn and the students hold up their glasses.)

PHELPS. This is a Temperance town; prescriptions, please.

(Some of the students show symptoms of cramps, while several drop in a faint. Many who get the liquor to revive the fallen, drink it themselves. When all have their glasses filled, they form a circle.)

PHELPS. *(singing)*

To the triumph of our frolic.

STUDENTS. Drink it down, drink it down.

(They drink.)

PHELPS. Why should youth be melancholic?

STUDENTS. Drink it down, drink it down.

PHELPS.

So, if pleasure whistles jigs,

Let us sound the board, like Nigs.

STUDENTS. Drink it down, drink it down,
Drink it down.

(They all drain their glasses and dance a few steps. They return to Phelps, holding up their glasses to be refilled.)

BALDWIN. Say, Temperance Town?

PHELPS. No, town of honest thirst!

(They mimic drunkards and Phelps refills all their glasses. They begin the song.)

PHELPS. Here's adieu to dear Eurek.

STUDENTS. Drink it down, drink it down.

(They drink.)

PHELPS. We take life up and drop Greek;—

STUDENTS. Drink it down, drink it down.—

(They drink.)

PHELPS. For, by only such a swop.

Can we ever get on top.

STUDENTS. Drink it down, drink it down,
drink it down.

(They drain their glasses and then light their cigarettes.)

BALDWIN. *(reading from a paper which he takes from his pocket.)*

They carried Fowler on their shoulders around the College, and in the Campus they crowned him with a wreath of immortelles. The expelled Student is the "class poet," and is ranked by the Eureka men as a genius, second only to Paul Gardner, whose verses form a part of their hazing ritual. Moreover, young Fowler is a martyr in their eyes, for it is said that his expulsion from the College is due less to his connection with the hazing of the colored student than to his authorship of a lampoon. Pandemonium reigned about the College all the afternoon.

At nightfall, they started for the train, destroying or carrying off with them every tradesman's sign on the way. The young ruffians are no doubt by this time in "a lock-up", and hard labor for six months might improve their manners, if not their morals, and teach them the decencies of life, that form so small a part of the College Curriculum.

(They howl, feigning alarm.)

PHELPS. Lock-step, lock-step; rehearse for your reform.

(They walk up and down a couple of times and then act out what Phelps suggests.)

Now get you to your work. Stich, bow-
legs, stich!

You are far luckier here on bread and
water,

Than half your blearing brothers in sweat
shops,

Who draw their wages through the needle's
eye.

Now, fiddle with both arms, ye cobblers!
Sol

Now, men knock off! Knock off! 't is
overtime

By half a minute. Count a half a minute
Daily for every man throughout the land,
And you will be amazed to find what hours,
Days, weeks, nay years, you rob from
honest toil!

What! let starvation, like a school-girl,
stare

You out of countenance? Strike! Why
strike now?

Because the very time that you ought not.

BALDWIN. It strikes me that we are a set of
fools.

PHELPS. Yes, yes, but conscious fools; not
like most men.

*(They become quiet on the entrance of Fred
Fowler with Paul Gardner.)*

FOWLER.

I do not want my mother's proposition
To weigh a straw on my behalf, remember.

GARDNER.

But, my friend, it is the hidden weight

On Justice's Scales that sends the hand
around

The Dial, in most cases in this world.

FOWLER. No matter.

GARDNER.

Your lampoon was the hidden weight
In the scales against you. Let me look
at it.

(Fowler takes the paper from his valise and hands it to Gardner who, while glancing over it, comments.)

Good! excellent! A sunrise of the Soul,
That youthens this old world and melts
its mists!

No fault except its scorn of Wisdom's saw,
That one must hold his peace on many
things

To prosper on this globe of cant and sham.

(Hands the paper back.)

PHELPS. *(Whispering)*. Present us.

FOWLER.

Oh, beg pardon! Gentlemen,
The epoch's glory and Eureka's pride,
Mr. Paul Gardner.

GARDNER. *(bowing)*.

I am always glad

To meet Eureka men, no matter where.

PHELPS.

Now gentlemen, Eureka's grand salute.

(They form a diamond around Gardner.)

Eureka! Ha! Ha! Ha! Eureka! Ha! Ha!
Eureka! Eureka! Eureka! Ha! Ha! Ha!
Eureka! Eureka! Eureka! Ha! Ha! Ha!

GARDNER.

Our Alma Mater has a claim for life
On our affections. What exalts her fame
Delights us; what takes from her glory,
grieves.

*(He pauses and gazes about at the signs taken
from the tradesmen.)*

Are these Eureka College's exhibits?
Ye hoodlums!

BALDWIN. Hear!

GARDNER.

Caligulas that go
To take an empire — Learning's — and
bring home
Lobsters and scallops! Friends, are these
the signs
Of culture worthy of Eureka men?
In your assault on *every Industry*,
What are you? Savages!

STUDENTS. Hear!

GARDNER.

You deserve
No "Reservation Ground," but rope and
limb.

(The Students howl.)

Still, it is not for others to apply
Correctives; we can do that best, ourselves.
Have you got brains?

BALDWIN.

Have we got brains? Oh, hear him!

GARDNER. Have you got pluck?

BALDWIN. Have we got pluck? Oh, hear him!

GARDNER.

Have you got grit?

STUDENTS. (*in chorus*).

Have we got grit? Oh, hear him!

GARDNER.

If you have brains and pluck and grit, why
haze

A guileless Freshman, when the world is
full

Of knowing, old offenders, whom to brand
Would be a public service?

STUDENTS. Right you are!

GARDNER. The Liberal Club deserves your
prompt regard.

FOWLER.

My Step-sire is a pillar of that Club,

And so is — ouch! No part of this for me.

GARDNER. Just hear its Resolutions, passed
to-night.

(*During the reading the Students manifest their feelings with groans and gestures, and Fowler steps aside, pressing his brow with his hands, every now and then.*)

Whereas, Eureka College, an Institution supposed to represent Northern culture —

STUDENTS. No supposition about it!

GARDNER. Has recently become the scene of a barbarity that chills the blood in our veins;

Whereas, a student was taken out at the dead of night and hanged by masked miscreants for no crime, except it be a crime to accept as true the inspired gospel of our Country's Constitution, Chapters Fourteenth, Fifteenth and Sixteenth;

Whereas, the ruffians rang the College bell in exultation during the outrage, showing thereby that they had nothing to fear from the College authorities, though the deed was one to shock modern civilization;

And, whereas, this gifted young man was branded a low coon—

STUDENTS. (*Laughing*). La-oc-o-on!—

GARDNER.

Thereby establishing beyond doubt that the perpetrators of the atrocity were actuated by racial prejudice, in defiance of the Most High who uttered his Commandment 'mid lightning and thunder on the Mount Sinai of Gettysburg; FOWLER. (*aside*). That is Pop Pighead's language. Oh, the sham!—

GARDNER.

Therefore, be it resolved, that we, the Members of the Liberal Club of New York City, representing the broadest moral ideas, attest our horror at the shocking deed aforesaid, and that we ascribe as the true cause of the outrage, the treason of example, if not of precept, taught those young desperadoes by the Eureka College authorities.

FOWLER. (*aside*).

But Beck must be considered — that's the rub!

There is no tide in all the world so hard
To row against, as woman's stream of tears,
And I have had no practice on that stream.

GARDNER. And be it further resolved —

BALDWIN. Enough! Enough!

PHELPS. On to the Liberal Club! Come, fellows, come.

There are gross insults which Lynch law alone

Can rightly handle. Any set of men
Who so deliberately vilify

Our Alma Mater, and traduce so vilely
Eureka's President and Faculty,

Should furnish all the world illumination
By hanging from the nearest lamp-posts
round.

(They bustle in preparation to go.)

GARDNER. "Ungear your feet of haste and
think awhile."

BALDWIN. On to that Club!

GARDNER. I have arranged a way

To wreck the Liberal Club, dear friends,
without

Demolishing the building, like a mob.

I had thirteen of you elected members.

STUDENTS. Thirteen!

GARDNER.

Why not thirteen? Old Glory started

With thirteen stars, and the world has yet
to hear

Of harm therefrom, excepting to her foes.

I want you, gentlemen, to blacken up.

FOWLER. Count me in, fellows! I see fun
ahead

For the whole bunch and a romance for me.

STUDENTS.

Eureka! Ha! Ha! Ha! Eureka! Ha! Ha!

Eureka! Eureka! Eureka! Ha! Ha! Ha!

ACT III

(Mr. Pighead's Reception-room and office. In the rear there is a bower in course of formation. There are flower-pots on the table in the centre of the room, and in the far corner a piano. Along the right wall there is a large book-case with wooden doors, designed by Mr. Pighead as a place to conceal a witness when he might want one to overhear testimony given to him in confidence.)

BECKY.

What fuss they make about mere hazing!
Fools!

What Student but would rather miss a
prize

For Greek, or French or Trigonometry,
Than an initiation, though one has
To lie beside a corpse! which, after all,
Is only a panjama stuffed with ice,
And headed by a pumpkin or a squash.
What harm in that? It cultivates the nerve.
Are we Phi Beta Kappa's criminals?
And are the Alpha Phis, Chi Mus, Tau
Taus,

The Alpha Chi Omegas, Chi chi chis,
The Alpha Omicrons, the Delta Deltas,
And Theta Gammas, fellow malefactors?
Well, I guess not! guess not! and yet all are
Alike, fit only for Reformatories,
According to Eureka's president,
When he expels Fred Fowler for an act
No worse than we have done, and would
again.

Oh, I just wish I had a chance to speak
My mind to Rector Wisdom! What a
name

For him! He ought to have it changed to
"Goose".

He would *disgrace* poor Fred, as though
expulsion

From College could *hurt him!* For is ex-
pulsion

Not, after all, the seal with which the col-
lege

Distinguishes true genius? It will link
Fred Fowler's name with Shelley's and with
Landor's

And those of all the great misunderstood
In every age. Yet how can I explain
The code of college honor to my father,
Who, in his heart, despises college men?
And who sent me these papers, cruelly
marked?

I shall just tear them up. —Lies, lies, all
lies!

(She tears the papers and throws them aside.)

'T is strange Fred has not called, nor sent
a note.

He surely, surely could not have believed
I meant the coolness, I exhibited

At our last parting. I was most to blame;
Still, when I said: "Now I shall test your
love, —

Give me the keeping of your College pin,"
Could true, true love refuse one anything?
Could true love make the firm refusal worse

By adding: "If you truly love me"—If!—
"Allow the diamond ever to remain
Upon my breast, where it was placed to
stay

By Honor with inviolable vow?"—
What right had he to nettle me with "If,"
And press it down with such a heavy blow,
As "truly"? as though I could love at all,
And not love truly! Anyhow, he ought
To have the sense to know that, if I parted
From him in anger, it could only be
That I might shortly, very shortly, taste
The double, treble sweet of making up,
Which is the richest luxury of love.

DINAH. (*Entering*). A colored man wants to
see Mr. Pighead.

BECKY. Tell him that Mr. Pighead is not home.

DINAH.

I did, but he's the sassiest nigger dat I ever
laid dese eyes on. He tol' me to go and show
my folks a good example by always telling
nothin' but the tru'. I say to him den, "go
down in de basement;" but he say, "how light
a parlor match down dah?"

BECKY. He must be crazy.

DINAH. (*jumping aside*). Lor' Miss!

FOWLER. (*entering*). Is Mr. Pighead —

BECKY. He cannot be seen.

FOWLER.

Beg pardon. If you step across the street,
You can behold him —

BECKY. Why do you persist?

I told you that he cannot now be seen.

FOWLER.

Could you not as a favor let him know
That I am here?

DINAH. Yah! Yah!

BECKY. (*sharply*). Your name.

FOWLER.

I am the Student who was taken out
At dead of night and hanged by miscreants,
Who rang the College bell with fiendish
glee.

BECKY. Be seated — Dinah, go call Pa.

(*Exit Dinah, and Becky returns to the flowers.*)

FOWLER. Fine day!

BECKY. (*coolly*). Yes.

FOWLER. (*looks around and is ill at ease*).

What is it that I am sitting on?

(*He picks up a book and reads the title.*)

"Disease, a sheer delusion." Don't it make
Your head grow dizzy, Miss, to watch how
fast

The fashionable world is Eddying?

It makes my brain as kinky as my hair.

BECKY. Addressing me?

FOWLER. Why, yes, — Dinah is gone.

(*He puts the book on the table and approaches
Becky.*)

Miss, do you teach the Sunday-school for
mutes?

BECKY. No longer. — How do you know that
I did?

FOWLER.

A fortune-teller told me I would meet
A lady of rare loveliness and grace

This morning, who could teach me how to speak.

BECKY. Well, surely you are not much of a mute.

FOWLER. Oh, yes, I am in what affects me most.

(In the sign language which in earlier days he used to practice with Becky, he explains that he is in love.)

BECKY. Pshaw! They forgot to send some Immortelles.

FOWLER. I have some, but they are in my valise.

Will you allow me to send them to you?

No charge! They are prepaid, Miss, by your smile.

Miss, do you sell those flowers?

BECKY. No.

FOWLER. Keep them all?

BECKY. No.

FOWLER. Do you send them to the hospital?

BECKY. No.

FOWLER. Alms-house?

(Re-enter Dinah who shares her glances between the flowers and Fowler.)

BECKY. No.

FOWLER. The squalid tenements?

BECKY. *(sharply)*.

I send them to "The Tombs," if you must know.

FOWLER. Have you some dear one buried there?

BECKY. No.

FOWLER. No?

BECKY. I think you awfully inquisitive.

FOWLER.

My thirst for knowledge, Miss, is my excuse.

Do you give them to the keepers?

BECKY. No.

FOWLER. Do those

To whom you give the flowers, throw them away?

BECKY.

I do wish father would come down. Call Pa

Again, Dinah — Yet — no — he would stay up

The longer.

FOWLER. Call him, Dinah!

DINAH. You smart nigger!

Don't you dare "Dinah" me.

FOWLER. (*bowing so graciously that Dinah is mollified.*)

Excuse me, Miss.

BECKY. (*aside*). Where have I seen those eyes? I have seen them.

FOWLER. May I ask what becomes of these sweet flowers?

BECKY. (*Who becomes more and more attracted by his eyes.*)

They are to deck the cell of a wayward youth,

One of my father's clients.

FOWLER. Wayward? How?

Drunk and disorderly?

BECKY. No.

FOWLER. Starving thief?

BECKY. No.

FOWLER. Give it up.

BECKY. He shot a wretched girl.

FOWLER. (*repeating her apathetic tone.*)

"A wretched girl!" Poor thing! Who
made her wretched?

The wayward youth?

BECKY. Suppose so.

FOWLER. Then no blossom

Would ever deck his cell, were you my
wife

And did my bidding.

DINAH. Yach! Yach! Yah!

BECKY. (*with dignity.*) Call Pa.

(*Exit Dinah.*)

FOWLER.

My frankness shocks you. I am frank by
nature

As well as name, and that is why at College
They called me fresh, and hung me up
to cure.

BECKY. (*studying his features and patching up
the papers she has torn.*)

The picture in the paper does not bear
The least resemblance to your countenance.

FOWLER.

No, come to think, I don't see how it could.
I had no tintype of myself, so that

The artist had to make my cousin's do.

(*Dinah enters holding a pair of shoes.*)

BECKY. Pa coming?

DINAH. I told him; but all he did

Was to hand out his shoes and shut the door.

BECKY. (*coloring up and in softened voice*).

Bring in a bootblack, Dinah, and tell him
To call here every morning.

DINAH. Lor' Miss Becky!

You's good and gooder every day you live.

BECKY. (*aside*).

A rare, rare chance to find out everything
About poor Fred.— Too bad they were not
truer

In sketching you. Those eyes are small
and lack expression.

FOWLER. That can be accounted for,

I think, by the fact the artist had exhausted
All his expression in my African pout.
Yach! Yach!

BECKY. You take it in good part.

FOWLER. Why not,

When it resembles my cousin more than me?

BECKY. Do you know Mr. Frederick Fowler?

FOWLER. Which?

The one that squints?

BECKY. Oh, no! he does not squint!

FOWLER. May be you mean the poet?

BECKY. Yes.

FOWLER. O yes!

He is my room-mate.

BECKY. (*dubiously*). Yes?

FOWLER. They did him wrong.

I told the Rector I had serious doubts
That Fred was one of them.

BECKY. Oh, that was noble.

FOWLER.

It was but just to him. Why Fred and I
Could not be closer. I share all his secrets,
And he shares mine. He is in love.

BECKY. Is he?

FOWLER. He keeps me wake whole nights, until
I set his amorous words to music, which
I do on David's Harp, whenever and
Wherever the inspiration seizes me.

BECKY. Indeed!

FOWLER. Oh! Oh!

BECKY. (*alarmed*). What! Are you ill?

FOWLER. Oh, lest I lose

The most entrancing air that comes to me —
The music for the words of his last song —
Pray, hold the copy — with the words this
way.

(She holds the copy and is about to read it, but obeys Fowler's directions. He plays the tune on the jewsharp, and Mr. Pighead enters in slippers and stands confounded at the sight of Rebecca, holding copy for the Colored composer.)

FOWLER. (*gesticulating wildly to Pighead*).

Go back! go back!

PIGHEAD. What sir!

FOWLER. Go back! go back!

I cannot brook an interruption.

PIGHEAD. You!

BECKY. (*indignantly*)— My father, Sir!

FOWLER. I don't care who he is,—
Out sir, till I get through,— But it is gone,
Forever gone! It never does come back

With all the pristine glory without mar
Of its original deliverance
To mortal ears!

PIGHEAD. (*recovering his breath*). What Sir!

FOWLER. (*calmly*). Why, inspiration!

Well, what is it that I can do for you?

PIGHEAD. And who are you?

FOWLER. Frank Merritt.

PIGHEAD. Who?

FOWLER. Frank Merritt,

The Student who was strangled at Eureka
By ruffians, led by one Fred Fowler.

PIGHEAD. Hem!

The very man I wanted. Please be seated.

You have a splendid case against the college.

BECKY. (*with flashing eyes*).

Did you not tell me, Sir, this very moment,

That Mr. Fowler had been wronged?

FOWLER. I, Miss?

BECKY. (*sharply*). Yes, *you, Sir!*

FOWLER. I forget. Maybe I did;

For, come to think, I always tell a lady

What I believe will please her, and besides,

I contradict no lady to her face.

PIGHEAD. (*eagerly*). Are you sure —

BECKY. What reliance can be placed —

PIGHEAD. (*muttering*).

No matter! He is my witness, — how im-
peach him?

You women would make hodge podge of
the law.

BECKY. (*derisively*). Strangled! I don't think
he was hurt a bit.

PIGHEAD. Young man, have you a bruise to show in proof?

FOWLER. No sir.

BECKY. I knew it.

PIGHEAD. (*surprised*). None?

FOWLER. (*whispering*). No, none to show Before a lady.

PIGHEAD.

Beck, go fix the flowers.

I want to see how you can beautify
The dungeon of the most unfortunate
Of all the clients I have ever had.

BECKY. Why not then, send them to the Tombs at once?

PIGHEAD. I have my reasons, Beck! I have my reasons.

BECKY. Only a needless, double trouble, Pa!
(*She goes to the table and lets some of the flowers drop on the floor.*)

PIGHEAD. The flowers have not offended.

BECKY. There's no room

For half the pots.

(*She opens the door of the book-case to put some of the flower-pots out of the way.*)

PIGHEAD. (*shutting the door with a snap*).

Do kindly keep this shut.

BECKY. 'T is only in the way, Pa, anyhow!

PIGHEAD. I am not asking, Beck, for your opinion.

FOWLER. I'm sorry to have riled the lady, Sir.

BECKY. How can you tolerate this person's presence?

FOWLER. *(to Pighead).*

No harm, sir, for the blacker that she looks
The more does she remind me of my love.

BECKY. Well, the idea! Pa, did you ever —

PIGHEAD. *(nervously pointing for her to go to the piano).*

Hush! —

(Becky goes to the piano and attempts to play Fred's new song).

PIGHEAD. Are you quite sure that Frederick
Fowler was one

Of the assaulting party?

FOWLER. Sure as that

My name is Merritt and that I was hazed.

PIGHEAD. I have no doubt of it.

FOWLER. Sir, when I read

Your Resolutions, it occurred to me

That you might kindly help me in a matter

Most serious to me.

PIGHEAD. What may it be?

FOWLER. I am in love —

PIGHEAD. Quite natural at your age.—

FOWLER. With a white lady.

PIGHEAD. Oh!

FOWLER. Why, do you think

My scorched complexion, Sir, a barrier?

PIGHEAD. Does she consent?

FOWLER. Yes, with a jumping heart

And face all radiant.

PIGHEAD. Has she a father?

FOWLER.

A gruff old devil! Though I would not
want

Him hear me say so. All he could trump
up

Against me was my color.

PIGHEAD. Prejudice.

Is he well off?

FOWLER. You'd think so, from his airs.—

What would you do?

PIGHEAD. If in your place?

FOWLER. No, Sir;

If in his place.

PIGHEAD. Oh, I should not have given
The color of your skin a thought at all.

FOWLER. No?

PIGHEAD.

No, Sir! I should have considered first,
Your character, and then, your family;
Then search the deeds of your collateral
For the securing of her happiness.

FOWLER. Oh, Mr. Pighead! would he had your
sense!

BECKY. (*rising*). Pa, what is that you said?

PIGHEAD. (*waving her back*).

Hush, please, go play.

Is she yet fourteen years of age?

FOWLER. Oh, yes!

PIGHEAD. Be sure about her age.

FOWLER. Well, how be sure

About a woman's age? The only way
To get at it, they say, is to allow
A year for every inch around her waist,
Which is the reason that prim prudes are
coy.

PIGHEAD. Tut! — Is she fourteen yet?

FOWLER. She's just eighteen.

PIGHEAD. Then she can marry, if in her right mind.

FOWLER. Are women, when in love, in their right mind?

PIGHEAD. It is their only lucid interval.

BECKY. What, Pa?

PIGHEAD. Nothing, my dear.

FOWLER. Now you are sure

The old man cannot drag her from my arms
To a retreat, or Europe, on that ground?

PIGHEAD.

Yes, for the Law respects the husband's
right

Before the father's.

FOWLER. But if he succeeds

In getting her, —

PIGHEAD. Come then to me, and I

Shall with a writ of Habeas Corpus, Sir,
Produce her body to the Court.

FOWLER. Her body?

What! Think her father will have murdered her?

PIGHEAD.

No, no! "Her body" is the legal term.

The Court will hand her over to her husband,

Just as her father should have done at first.

FOWLER. Who ought we get to marry us, sir?

PIGHEAD. (*impatiently*). Oh!

An alderman can tie the knot, young man,
So fast that all the mules throughout the
states,

Though they should pull together, could
not break it.

Here is my card, give it to Alderman Bowers.

FOWLER. Where can I find him?

PIGHEAD. At the City Hall,

Or in the office, back of his saloon.

FOWLER. Oh, how I thank you, Sir!

PIGHEAD. "But thank you," Sir,

Young man, does not pay office rent.

FOWLER. (*thoughtfully*). That's so.

PIGHEAD. If you wish me to be in readiness,

In case of an emergency, my charge

Will be one hundred.

FOWLER. For the job complete?

PIGHEAD. No, no; that's to hold me in readiness.

FOWLER. Well, if you clear me —

PIGHEAD. Tut! I never take

Contingent cases.

FOWLER. Will ten dollars down

Do, and the rest in checks, sir, dated ahead?

PIGHEAD.

No check from any college student for me!

For forgery seems the most successful
branch

Taught at our Colleges.

FOWLER. Why so ferocious?

The College may produce the skillful forger

And lawyer; but is she not sorry for it?

Her cheek burns crimson, seeing how they
chum

Together in the cell, when one is caught;

For either always helps the other out.

PIGHEAD. More knave than fool.

FOWLER.

I cannot hear you slander
My Alma Mater, and remain a mute.
Besides you cast reflection, as were I
Not black enough. You would not were
I white.

PIGHEAD.

Tut! Tut! young man! Do not misunderstand me.

I think you have a strong, strong damage case

Against Eureka College.

FOWLER. (*eagerly*). Have I?

PIGHEAD. Yes.

FOWLER. I never would have guessed it.

PIGHEAD. Certainly not!

The trouble is that clients, seldom knowing
That they are hurt beyond the scratch that
heals,

Forget the wound to all their finer feelings
Within a month or so, and drop the case,
Except they have already paid a fee,
And want to get at least their money back.
I want the cash in order to insure

Your presence when I need it, to establish
How you were almost murdered at Eureka,—

BECKY. I do not think that he was hurt a bit.—

PIGHEAD. Because you happened to be dark
of skin.

FOWLER. I will be there sir; *with my wounds
kept fresh.*

I have ten dollars.

PIGHEAD. (*not pretending to notice the whispered remark italicized, but smiling gratified at such a good witness*).

That will do at present

Though I would not accept so small a sum

Upon my word of honor, were you white.

FOWLER. Sure, you will not go back on me?

(*Hands him the money.*)

PIGHEAD. I, Sir?

Do you suppose I would betray my client?

FOWLER. A little piece of paper, a receipt.

PIGHEAD. (*sitting down at the desk with signs of irritation*).

An excellent trait, young man, to get receipts.

(*Hands it to Fowler.*)

FOWLER. (*reading*).

Received from Frank Merritt ten dollars on account for professional services.

JOHN HENRY PIGHEAD.

(*He folds up the receipt and puts it in his pocket and then looks up awe-struck at the book-case.*)

Great Library! But why, Sir, has it shutters

Instead of windows, like a beer-saloon

On Sunday?

PIGHEAD.

Oh! two reasons! One to save

My rarest books from plunder by my friends,

Under the false pretense of borrowing them,

And secondly, just *not to gratify*,

The too inquisitive.

FOWLER. That's one on me.

Guess I shall have to foot it to Eureka;
For I have only just one nickel left.

PIGHEAD.

There is no healthier exercise than walking.
When I was a young man, why, I thought
nothing

Of forty miles through woods, and over
fences,

To a town meeting, or Fall term of school.

FOWLER. Good day.

PIGHEAD.

Good day, my friend, and may success
And joy attend you.

FOWLER. Au revoir, young lady.

BECKY. Well, what impertinence!

PIGHEAD. Blame yourself

For your familiarity with him!

BECKY. Pa!

PIGHEAD. I could not believe my eyes, Rebecca,

On entering this room.

BECKY. I know not why

I did his bidding. I am puzzled still.

(*aside*).

If there is such a thing as an evil eye,

He has it, for his glances trouble me.

PIGHEAD. (*after walking up and down*).

Rebecca! — But no matter, never mind.

(*She takes a few steps toward him.*)

(*Then returns to the flowers. He walks up
and down muttering. The basement bell rings.*)

What if she knew the truth? What if she
knew

I am her guardian only by the grace
Of acid and of ink? She must, must
know;

Else, how can I move further in my plan?
Yet, what if she, indignant, should demand
A full accounting for these fifteen years?

(He stands and gazes up at the ceiling).

(Dinah enters with a bill in her hand and also looks up at the ceiling. Becoming conscious of Dinah's presence, he turns, and taking the bill glances at it, and puts it in his pocket. Dinah retires.)

Hem! Who the devil can keep up the
chase

With running bills *and live*? Let them
run on —

Shall I, or shall I not out with the truth?
(He pauses, after which he tosses a dollar in the air and catches it.)

Head, yes; tail, no. 't is no. Now the
Planchette.—

(He takes the instrument from a chair and sets it on the table.)

Shall I, or shall I not, out with the truth?
Speak, mystical intelligence!

Hem, The Planchette and toss-up are the
same.

BECKY. Speaking, Pa?

PIGHEAD. No, no! Thinking! only thinking!

Rebecca! I desire a word with you.

BECKY. All right, Pa.

PIGHEAD. Sit beside me.

BECKY. Got good news?

PIGHEAD.

I have done you a grievous, foolish wrong,
In not acquainting you with all my aims,
And seeking not your counsel.

BECKY. (*laughing*). Pa, what counsel

Could I with no experience, give you
Who know the World and all its wicked
ways?

PIGHEAD. Beck, you have intuition, which is
better.

BECKY. Better!

PIGHEAD. A woman's intuition meets
With less reversals in the Higher Court
Of this strange, inexplicable existence,
Than man's experience.

BECKY. (*laughing*). Pa, mean to say
That woman's intuition can compete
With tossing up a dollar in the air,
Or the Planchette?

PIGHEAD. Stop bantering, Rebecca!
I am in earnest.

BECKY. (*still laughing*). So am I! Now answer.

PIGHEAD.

Why, certainly, when woman is in love —
The lucid interval, in which she sees
Through a stone wall as clearly as through
glass.

I know not how she does it, but she does!
(*Becky goes to the table and, lifting a book, tries
to see Mr. Pighead through it.*)

BECKY.

Here is a stone wall, Mother Eddy's book,—

I can't see through it!! Therefore, say,
Pa - pa,
Am I without a "lucid interval?"

PIGHEAD.

O Beck! You make me giddy with new life.
Come, stand beneath the bower!—'Tis but
a whim.

BECKY.

You want to see how I would look a bride!
This is the proper pose.

PIGHEAD. Oh, you can see

Through a stone wall as clearly as through
glass,

Rebecca! Oh, Rebecca! (*Caresses her.*)

BECKY. (*withdrawing from him.*)

Father! Father!

I do believe that you have drunk some wine!
You know your promise.

PIGHEAD. (*confused*). Beck!

BECKY. You act as strangely

As on the morning after I came home
On graduating, and twice since. Why, Pa,
Had I a lover who would hug so hard,
I should take him for nothing but a bear
And give him to a show-man.

PIGHEAD.

That was play!

But I have done with play, Rebecca! Done!
And never shall henceforward, waste a
smile.

The word I want with you, Beck, is about
The Club's affair to-morrow night. You
know,

The programme has been changed, that
we may have

A banquet and invite our lady friends
To grace it with their presence.

BECKY. In the boxes

To gape down at the gentlemen agorging,
Like poor street Arabs, flat-nosed at the
windows?

PIGHEAD. No! You must come.

BECKY. (*laughing*). Pa, what have I to wear?

PIGHEAD. Oh, anything!

BECKY.

The notice is too short.

Who changed the programme? I am sure
his wife,

Or daughter, had it done that they might
take

A mean advantage of the rest of us.

PIGHEAD. Oh, Bond, of course!

BECKY. Oh!

PIGHEAD.

Who else could have done it?

He tires me, wants to make the Liberal
Club

Which, really, is the creature of my brain
And hard incessant work, a stepping stone
For him to London, as Ambassador;
But it shall be a stepping-stone for me,
As well as him, or else, for neither one.
There's soon a vacancy caused by the death
Of the Chief Justice; I deserve the place;
For what have I got out of politics
So far, excepting, once, a nomination

For Congress, when there was no chance
to win?

That's how they pay the workers who are
fools.

Oh, I know politics from A to Z!

BECKY. Did you not always know?

PIGHEAD. Yes, but I made

No use of what I knew, but mean, hence-
forth,

To leave no stone unturned to gain my point.

BECKY. How I shall pray and pray,—

PIGHEAD. (*checking her*).

"Pray? simpleton!

BECKY. What, Pa?

PIGHEAD. (*smiling sardonically*).

A messenger with Grace from Heaven

Could never find the gate to politics.

BECKY. Why not?

PIGHEAD.

Because that gate moves on its hinges
In the infernal regions, deep and dark,
Where it stirs up such foulness, only those,
Inured till dead of sense, can stand the
stench.

How I loathe politics!

BECKY. Pa, why not quit?

PIGHEAD. When one is in, one never can get out.

BECKY. No?

PIGHEAD.

Save by getting office, then despising
The devil, on whose shoulders one has
climbed,
And taking care that he will never rise.

Oh, I know politics! I shall henceforth
Do as the rest do — leave no trick untried,
Have no opinions, or change them with
a smile!

Then whenupon the Bench in Washington,
My one and only thought shall be, Rebecca,
To make you happy.

BECKY. (*kisses him*).

It has always been

Your one and only thought, dear Father!

PIGHEAD. Yes,

But then, my whole ambition, dearest one,
Will be for your advancement socially,
In keeping with our station. With your wit,
Beauty and sprightliness — (*pauses*).

BECKY.

Oh, say it out!

That I can catch a Duke and then come
home

As red-eyed as a ferret, and with tears
Enough to fill a cistern!

PIGHEAD. No, but one

That I am sure will make you happy, Beck.
No struggler for the wherewith to exist,
But rather, Beck, a man who has amassed
A fortune, and who has achieved renown.

BECKY.

Oh, as for that, Pa, I should much prefer
To share my husband's struggles, and
help him

To make his fortune and achieve his fame.

PIGHEAD. Yes, and be thrust aside, when they
are made.

Beck, I know life!

BECKY. But, Pa, what has all this
To do with Fred? Has he in his own
right —

PIGHEAD.

Oh, he has nothing, if I must divulge
What I should keep a secret. If you doubt
What I am telling you, you know the use
I put this case to, when I want a witness
To hear what is told me in confidence.
Just stow yourself in there when I am
drawing

The will up with his father.

BECKY. Pa! would you
Have me to do so vile a thing as that?

PIGHEAD.

It would convince you that I tell the truth,
When I say, "*he has nothing.*"

BECKY. (*passionately*). He has me,
Whatever else he has not, and I know
That, having him, I have all I desire.

PIGHEAD.

A school-girl's fancy that, like chewing-
gum,
You must discard, now that you have grown
up!

BECKY.

No fancy, Father! Fred and I have talked
Over and over how, when free to use
His fortune, he could do the greatest good;
But, that he must begin by being just
To the last dollar, though he be obliged
Thereafter to depend on his own brain
And muscle —

PIGHEAD. What!—

BECKY.

For oh! to use his words —
How noble! Oh how noble! — “He a man,
Would feel ashamed to meet the rising sun,
Except with life as open, as that orb’s,
To all the world, and with, at least, some
light
And warmth for those in darkness and in
cold.
My soul is all a tremble with delight
At thought of him.

PIGHEAD.

Great Scott! Insanity
Is catching. I must end it, once for all.
(*cooly*). I never blunder, sizing up a fool,
Rebecca, and I told him so to-day,
When he had the bare-faced affrontery
To call on me and say: “Not guilty, Pop!”
Blind justice grabbed me for somebody
else,
And was too stubborn, then, to let me go.”

BECKY. He told the truth, you can depend on
that.

PIGHEAD.

I have forbidden him to cross this threshold,
Rebecca, or communicate with you,
Because he has disgraced himself forever
By his atrocious conduct at Eureka.

BECKY (*catching breath*). You have?

PIGHEAD. I have.

BECKY. You have?— *Pa, I have not.*

My heart, soul, life, are not Eureka College,

That Fred can ever be expelled from them!
*(Mr. Pighead gazes at Becky for a few seconds,
then at the ceiling, and without a word, walks
out, making up for his lack of verbal expression
by a slam of the door.)*

ACT IV

(The rooms of the Liberal Club, decorated with American flags and with the portraits of Washington, Lincoln, Fred. Douglas and other statesmen. Many guests are seated while others stand in groups. Mrs. Bond with her meek husband at her side is the centre of a bevy of ladies, and turns graciously toward Paul Gardner.)

MRS. BOND. Good evening, Mr. Gardner.

GARDNER. Oh, good evening!

MRS. BOND. You heard about my boy?

GARDNER. Yes.

MRS. BOND. *(in a low voice)*.

Do you think

They will expel him?

GARDNER. Hardly think they will.

MRS. BOND. When will I know? My head aches with this worry.

GARDNER. I am arranging now for his return.

MRS. BOND.

How good of you! Oh! this brings such relief!

There never was a gentler boy than Fred.
He was just like a girl.

MR. BOND. He has improved

Greatly at College, Dear, by all accounts.

MRS. BOND.

Oh! You could never see the good in him.
You never could!

MR. BOND. No, Dear, I never could.

Maybe my sight is bad, but "*maybe—er*" —

MRS. BOND. Hush.

GARDNER. *(whispering)*.

Pardon me, dear Madam, just a moment.
When may I call to have a final talk
About your great endowment to Eureka?

MRS. BOND.

Oh! let me see. Just let me see! These
days

I rarely have a moment to myself.

These social duties make a drudge of one.

GARDNER. (*after a pause*).

It is important to the College world.

MRS. BOND.

I shall send word to you by Mr. Bond,
My first spare morning.— Ladies, have you
heard

About my collie having got first prize?

(*Gardner smiles and goes among his friends*).

SEVERAL LADIES. Yes! Yes!

MRS. BOND. The papers had his picture.

MR. BOND. Yes!

In one of them, his picture was life size,
And got ten times more space than Mrs.
Bond's.

Not one of them, however, did him justice.
The artist should have drawn him with a
rope.

MRS. BOND. Bond, you just hush.

MRS. HAUGHTYHEAD.

What do the papers mean

By calling you Diana, Mrs. Bond?

MRS. BOND.

Ha! Ha! Did you read that?— Because,
dear ladies,

I hunted down and slew the horrid stag!

(*Mrs. Haughtyhead follows every word and movement of Mrs. Bond with a sweet smile and an approving nod of the head*).

A LADY. I never heard of it.

ANOTHER. Nor I.

ANOTHER. Nor I.

MRS. BOND.

Your husbands would not tell you, certainly.

The men are still as death on that, and
leave

The telling of the story all to me.

MR. BOND.

I do not think it will on that account,
Lose much in circulation.

MRS. BOND. Hold your tongue

And take the punishment that you deserve.

(*The ladies laugh*)

About a month ago, I wanted Bond

To take me to the Opera to see —

I now forget whom.

MR. BOND. Worth, my dear! —

MRS. BOND. But he

Had an engagement he could not postpone.

He said so, with his eyes cast on the rug,

As had the tigress moved her eye, or tail,

And his voice was just weak enough to
turn

State's evidence against him.

THE LADIES. (*glancing at Mr. Bond*).

Te-he-he!

MRS. HAUGHTYHEAD. What then, dear?

MRS. BOND. Off he went. I felt a fit

Of crying coming on, but put it off

And donn'd my seal-skin. Gip began to
whine

Most piteously, as he always does
When things uncommon are about to
happen.

I took my darling up and followed Bond.
My instinct led me to the Club, and there
The Negro at the door, said: "Mr. Bond?
He is upstairs; but, Madam, wait! wait!
wait!! wait!!!

Let me go up and tell him you are here!
"No, no," said I, "just let *me* go for him."

(The ladies laugh).

I came in here, sat there. I heard a buzz
About me, and a member, with his hand
Over his mouth, hiss to the vocalist
Something I could not catch. It sounded
to me

Like "Cheese it! Cheese it." Instantly
the singer

Became confused, grinned like an idiot,
And stammered out that he forgot the
words.

At this the Members roared so horrid loud,
Dear Ladies, that my ear-rings fairly shook.
"Go on! Go on!" they shouted, and the
voice

Loudest of all, was whose, do you suppose?
My husband's. Gip knew it and made
a spring

From out my arms; but came back with
a yelp,

And has not tapped the floor since with his
tail

At Bond's approach. Has he, my Dear?

THE LADIES. Te-He!

MRS. BOND.

Raising my voice, I said: "why not go on?"

O Ladies! You should then have heard
the hush —

Yes, *heard* the hush!— I walked up toward
the stage,

But looking right and left, could see no
face!

All turned their backs on me. Ah, *well*
they might!

Bond, trying to elude me, sprang behind
A green partition which, that moment, fell,
Disclosing what, dear ladies, horrified
Me speechless!!

MR. BOND. Wonderous feat!

MRS. BOND. Oh, more than feet!

What I saw then, I cannot tell aloud,

But, just to punish him, shall whisper it.

(*She whispers to the ladies and they look
amazed*).

MR. BOND. Is whispering in company good
manners?

(*The ladies grin*).

MRS. HAUGHTYHEAD. What did you then do?

MRS. BOND.

Simply said, "Bond, home."

On all *important business* after this,

Remember, *I go, too*.

LADIES. Te-he! Te-he!

MRS. BOND. How sheepish he did look —
· acknowledge it.

MR. BOND. *Finish* the story. Leave out no
detail.

Repeat the curtain lecture.

LADIES. Te-he-he!

MRS. BOND. A curtain lecture then of course.

MR. BOND. (*sighing*). Of course!

LADIES. Te-he!

MRS. BOND.

Imagine my amazement, Ladies,
When, by mere accident, I heard, next day,
The Club intended to repeat the stag!

MR. BOND. Dear, there you are mistaken.

MRS. BOND. I am never

Mistaken, Bond, in what I know. Have I
To hold my hand up every day, to know
This ring is on my finger? I guess not!!
I caught you, and that is enough for me.

MR. BOND. Dear, free me and give me another
chance.

MRS. BOND.

Stop talking silly.—What was I to do?
To rouse the women for a midnight raid
Upon the Liberal Club? No..

MR. BOND. What a loss

That was to the comic papers!

MRS. BOND. Hold your tongue,
You brazen thing!

LADIES. What did you do?

MRS. BOND. Had Bond

To call a special meeting to invite
The members' wives and daughters.

MR. BOND. More than that!
I have the Resolution in my pocket.

(*Takes it out*).

P.S. in pencil.

MRS. BOND. Say right out "'t is mine."

MR. BOND.

No need — 'T is a towncrier of that fact.
"Resolved moreover that our lady friends
Be given the freedom of the house, with keys
To enter, day or night, and that no door
Whatever shall be barred from their in-
spection.

LADIES. (*imitating men faintly*).

Hurrah! Hurrah!

MRS. HAUGHTYHEAD.

How did you get the members
Together for the meeting?

MRS. BOND. That was easy.

Bond owns this Club —

MR. BOND. Dear!

MRS. BOND. Bond, you told me so.

Did you not say that nearly all the mem-
bers

Are in arrears for dues, and that their
names

Are posted on the walls?

MR. BOND. Now, that will do.

MRS. BOND. (*pushing aside the bunting*).

Why here they are, just as you said! They
hang

Like mirrors. Oh, no, not like mirrors,
either,

For then the members surely would draw
near

To see if they could not improve their looks.

MR. BOND. They would, dear, were they
women.

MRS. BOND. Bond, you fool!

I have a mind to teach those dozen parrots,

I took a fancy to the other day,

No other words than these: "Bond is a
fool!"

And hang the cages out of our front win-
dows.

MR. BOND. You will spoil all, my lady!

MRS. BOND. Bond, how dense!

Don't you suppose my mentioning the
matter

In company will have far more effect

Than posting up their names upon the wall,

Where they are never seen? Be practical.

*(Fred Fowler, disguised as a colored dandy,
enters with Miss Amelia, white of feature and
stylishly attired. They occasion much nudging
and looking around on the part of the guests.)*

FOWLER. Have we disturbed the flock? They
look cross-eyed

At us, like geese, and follow, when we move.

*(Mrs. Haughtyhead passes Amelia with evi-
dence of disdain.)*

AMELIA. That woman caught her skirts up
passing me!

FOWLER.

What would you have her do, dear? Let
them drop?

This is no surf. Be sisterly enough
To let her have a buckle, or a belt, —
Hers must have broken.

AMELIA. Me give her a belt,
Or buckle, or a pin? Not though I had
A gross of them. Did you not notice how
She shut her eyes at me?

FOWLER. A woman never
Hides any beauty, even for a second;
'T is only her defects she closes up.
If the old lady, dear, had eyes like you,
I doubt if she would *ever* shut the lids.

AMELIA. Inquire for Mr. Pighead. *He* has
manners.

FOWLER. (*to Mr. Bond, who takes no notice of him*)

Have you the honor, Sir, of an acquaintance
With Mr. Pighead? Say, Sir, how dis-
tinguish

The gentlemen in this promiscuousness?

MRS. BOND. Conduct us, Bond. We will in-
spect the house.

MRS. HAUGHTYHEAD. I thought the people
were to be select.

MR. BOND. (*to Mrs. Bond*).

Dear, the Liberian Ambassador.

That's some of Pighead's work.

(*Goes out with Mrs. Bond and friends*).

FOWLER. (*addressing Pighead*).

Are you acquainted
With Mr. Pighead?

PIGHEAD. (*passing on*). I should think I am.

FOWLER. (*to Alderman Bowers*).

Excuse me, sir, Do you know Mr. Pighead?

ALDERMAN BOWERS. (*laughing*).

Why, don't he know himself? That's one
on Pig.

FOWLER. What does he look like?

BOWERS. (*confidentially*).

Like the devil washed
For Sunday.

FOWLER. Is he barefaced?

BOWERS. No, black-jawed;

But say! If you are trying to catch him
With a subpoena, you are in hard luck,
For he is birdy, like a millionaire.

FOWLER. I am a gentleman.

BOWERS. Say! Say! Come off!

FOWLER. A colored gentleman.

BOWERS. Oh, yes! Yes, yes!

And say, if you should move to Africa,
That's just north of Hell's Kitchen, don't
forget

Jim Bowers, the Alderman, Election Day.
'T is worth a five, and bring your friends
along.

FOWLER. Say, Alderman, a word in confidence.
(*They step aside*).

The twinkle in your eye is full assurance
To me, that you enjoy a little joke.

BOWERS. I do, if I am not the butt.

FOWLER. Look here,

I am a Student at Eureka College,
And I have corked my face to have some fun
With "Resolution Pighead."

BOWERS. (*choking with laughter*)

Go it! Go it!

My money is upon your nag, my boy!

(*Fowler and Amelia move on, gazing about and making inquiries right and left. At length, Pighead is pointed out as he draws near to Gardner*).

PIGHEAD.

Why were you so thin-skinned at our last meeting

About those Resolutions?

GARDNER. Why, because

Eureka is my Alma Mater, Sir,

And I felt hurt at what dishonored her.

PIGHEAD. Felt hurt!! What are you giving me?

GARDNER. Something

Beyond your comprehension.

(*moves away*).

PIGHEAD. Ho! Indeed!

AMELIA. Which one? which one?

SEVERAL. (*pointing at Pighead*). There!

AMELIA. Oh, the first kiss, mine!

(*She attempts to kiss Pighead who draws away confused*).

PIGHEAD. What do you mean, young woman, by this boldness?

AMELIA. 'Tis every woman's privilege —

PIGHEAD. What is?

AMELIA. To kiss a hero.

PIGHEAD. I am not a hero

That you can make a fool of me.

AMELIA. You are,
Having the courage, Sir, of your convictions.
Your Resolutions were no hollow cant!

PIGHEAD. True, very true.

AMELIA. A kiss, then!

(Fowler holds Pighead's arms and Amelia kisses him several times.)

FOWLER. Fall in line,
Young ladies! Kiss the hero of the hour
Before the coo-coo sings.

PIGHEAD. Let go of me.

FOWLER.

There is no relish like a woman's kiss,
To give a man an appetite for life.

PIGHEAD. *(aside)*.

I had the feeling that those Resolutions
Would make me famous.

AMELIA. *(Presenting an album and a fountain pen)*.

Now your autograph,
Next to John Brown, whose "Soul goes
marching on."

(He writes his name).

ALDERMAN BOWERS. *(Reaching over his neighbors' shoulder and flapping Pighead's ear)*.

If for the Widow —

AMELIA. Sir, I am no widow.

BOWERS. Or for the orphan, put me down for
ten.

AMELIA.

'T is not subscriptions, but the autographs
Of celebrated men that I collect.

BOWERS.

Beg pardon. Might have known that when
my friend
Put down his name for anything. Hey,
Pig?

FOWLER. (*to Pighead about to start*).

Wait, wait, Sir! won't you give the bride
away?

PIGHEAD. What!

FOWLER. Or act as best man?

AMELIA. Do, kindly do!

PIGHEAD. (*aside*). Best man? Well, I guess
not! (*starts off*).

FOWLER. Can you omit

The best man, Dear, from you trousseau?

AMELIA. (*reluctantly*). Oh, y-e-s!

FOWLER. But, Dear, the ring! Did I give you
the ring?

AMELIA. You placed it in the pocket next your
heart.

FOWLER. (*after fumbling*).

It is not there!! Better announce the loss.

(*He stands on a chair*).

Ladies and gentlemen, my ring is gone.

It has a green cat's eye, that in the dark
Shines with so fierce a brilliance, my be-
trothed,

With it upon her finger, might repose

Within a rat-pit on a cake of cheese,

Without alarm. I chose the green cat's eye

That it might charm the song-birds to our
bower,

And let no mouse come out, to terrify

The elephant of our connubial bliss.
The gentleman or lady who returns
The ring to its right owner, will receive
My heartfelt thanks, and have no questions asked.

PIGHEAD. (*returning*). What do you mean?
Down! Down! I say come down!

FOWLER. Have you the ring?

PIGHEAD. Do you know where you are?

FOWLER. In good society — among reformers
Of other folks — where kleptomaniacs
Are natural as colored chicken thieves
Down where I came from. I feel quite at home.

Bar every door and let nobody out
Until the ring is found!

AMELIA. Why, there it is!

FOWLER. Where?

AMELIA. On your finger.

FOWLER. I apologize,
Ladies and gentlemen, aye, from my heart.
It goes to show that it is wiser oft,
In fashionable life, to search one's self
Than cry, "stop thief!" Now for the business which
Has brought us here. I thank you, one and all,
Ladies and gentlemen, for having come
To see us married.

PIGHEAD. What!

GARDNER. (*to Pighead*). Your friend is daft.
(*The guests whispering to each other become uproarious in their laughter.*)

PIGHEAD. Help me to take him out.

GARDNER. No, humor him.

Think of the ladies.

FOWLER. Why do you folks *laugh*?

Is matrimony, friends, a laughing matter?

It is the greatest of united states,

A world power that the civilized respect.

(*louder laughter*).

Why were we asked to come here? I repeat,

Why were we asked to come? To be made fools of?

PIGHEAD. (*eagerly*).

Friend, who asked you to come?

FOWLER. This invitation.

(*Takes a note out of his pocket and reads*)

"Dear Mr. Beelzebub: —

"Learning that you are to wed an estimable white lady, The Liberal Club extends its cordial congratulations and would feel honored if you would accept the use of its Reception-room to-morrow evening for the ceremony. It assures you that there will be a large assemblage of well wishers present."

PIGHEAD. Whose name is signed to that?

FOWLER. John Henry Pighead's.

PIGHEAD. An outrage!

FOWLER. (*to Pighead*). Call the Clergyman.

PIGHEAD. (*furiously*). None here!

FOWLER.

You are mistaken, Sir, for you should know

This is a trial marriage.

PIGHEAD. (*screaming*). I don't care!

FOWLER. A trial marriage and no Parsons
here!

PIGHEAD. No.

FOWLER. Then the Seer.

PIGHEAD. What!

FOWLER. Form a circle, friends.

(*Some of the guests form a circle*).

The Swedish sage, to whom it was first
given

To see the good in Trial Marriages,
And who has never yet failed to appear
At any seance from Oshosh to Gotham,
Will tie our love according to the spirit
That is without a knot. Now be so kind
As darken up the room.

(*He turns off a gas jet.*)

PIGHEAD. Here! Here! hands off!

FOWLER.

Why not make the conditions favorable?

Are you so ignorant as not to know

That spirits are owl-eyed, and therefore see
Best in the darkness?

PIGHEAD. (*to Alderman Bowers*).

Go for the police.

ALDERMAN BOWERS.

Not me, old man! The cops are all used up
With watching gambling houses and saloons,
Arresting honest women by mistake,
And perjuring themselves to dodge the fine.

GARDNER. (*to Pighead*).

Be careful now! How call in the police
To throw out an invited guest, and colored?

ALDERMAN BOWERS. (*laughing*).

No use, I tell you! They are so fagged out,
They cannot lift a foot to trip a thief
Upon the highway, nor a hand to reach
The coin collector, monkeying at night
Up to the second story of your house.—
Pig, let me manage him.

PIGHEAD. What! — Try.

ALDERMAN BOWERS. Look here.

Young coon, are you stuck on yourself too
much

To let an Alderman hitch up the team?

FOWLER. (*to Amelia*).

An Alderman! A city father, dear,
Whose hand is always out to help the poor,
The sick and old, and who, on frosty nights,
Is a Salvation Army in himself
In getting shoes, hot coffee and a bed
For every shivering creature, White or
Black!!

AMELIA. The picture of *ben-evolence*!

ALDERMAN BOWERS. No, Bowers.

Coon, hit me with a vote, but no bouquets.
Want me to do the deed?

AMELIA. Yes.

ALDERMAN BOWERS. Ready?

FOWLER AND AMELIA. Yes.

PIGHEAD.

No! As the Chairman of the House Com-
mittee,

Sir, I forbid it!

BOWERS. (*To Fowler and Amelia*).

Come out on the stoop.

PIGHEAD. There I forbid it, too!

ALDERMAN BOWERS. (*winking to Fowler*).

Do you play poker?

FOWLER. Do I eat possum?

ALDERMAN BOWERS. Follow me down stairs,
Where any member has the right to bring
A friend or two, to have a quiet game.

PIGHEAD. (*stepping before Alderman Bowers*).

No, no! no where upon the premises!!

ALDERMAN BOWERS. My dues are paid! I
stand upon my rights.

PIGHEAD. The good name of the Club.—

AMELIA. (*pulling Fowler vigorously*). Come,
darling, come,—

ALDERMAN BOWERS. You bet I will dead-head
it after this.—

AMELIA.

Else, every parson will be fast asleep,
And, if aroused, turn over in his bed,
Thinking our knock his wife's or Curate's
snore.

(*Pighead goes out furiously, stopping here and there to answer with wild gesticulations the questions of the astonished guests. Fowler, taking Amelia's arm starts off, but, after a few steps stops and stands absorbed.*)

AMELIA. Come, why delay?

FOWLER. I have a scruple.

AMELIA. (*affecting surprise*).

Scruple!!

FOWLER. Yes. All the Beelzebubs inherit it
From Bill, the first infected.

AMELIA. (*coaxing*). I've no scruple.

FOWLER. Sure?

AMELIA. I should say so.

FOWLER. That is just the reason

That I have. When a bride is over eager,

A man should instantly apply the brakes.

AMELIA. How strange you talk! What has
come over you?

What ails you? Speak!

FOWLER.

I gave my love for you

A long, fair trial, but the verdict, read

Only this moment to my consciousness,

Favors another.

AMELIA. Belz! Can't you appeal?

FOWLER. No. An appeal from judgment costs
like hell.

AMELIA. Oh, monster!

FOWLER. Let us settle amicably

Our differences. Could you be the brides-
maid,

Amelia?

AMELIA. What!!!

FOWLER.

'T is only one remove,

And is a step aside from every risk.

AMELIA. You villian!

FOWLER.

Come, my girl, be reasonable.

I mean to be quite generous. In fact,

Nothing would please me more than have
you come

Along with us upon our honey-moon,

Provided that you give me back my letters.

AMELIA. (*ironically*).

Those shaded red and full of crimson blots,
Because, when writing them, Love dipt
your pen

Into the inkhorn of your bleeding heart?

FOWLER. The same, dear girl! the same.

AMELIA. (*aside*) Well, next to Love,
The sweetest thing to woman is revenge!—
O Belz! Belz! Belz! I shall return your
notes,

And be brides-maid.

FOWLER. Will you?

AMELIA. I will! I will!

If you take me upon your honeymoon
Which will, of course, be to Niagara.
I want to see those Falls, because I know,
Though mighty and appalling, they are
still

Less awful than a woman's tearful heart
Tumbling without cessation, night or day,
Summer or winter, from the heights of
Love.

FOWLER. Come, come, all that is past.

AMELIA. Where is the bride?

FOWLER. I thought that I would surely meet
her here.

AMELIA. Who is she, that I never knew till now
Of her existence?

FOWLER. Becky —

AMELIA. Oh, that thing,
Who does not know enough — to be on
hand
At her own wedding!

FOWLER. (*Beckoning to Alderman Bowers*).

Alderman! The fun

Is just beginning. I am to elope

With Pighead's daughter, and have him
engaged

Already to defend the husband's rights

Against the father's. Here is his receipt,

And also card which he gave me for you.

(*Hands them to Bowers*).

ALDERMAN BOWERS.

What! Jimminy! Say, Coon, give me this
paper

To hang it with my license over the bar.

FOWLER. Will you perform the rite?

ALDERMAN BOWERS. Will I! Will I!

I have been waiting for this chance for
years!

With me upon the platform, he once called

The Honorable Board of Aldermen,

Of which I am a member, and no better

Than any of the rest, a set of boodlers!!

I swore then that I would get square some
day.

FOWLER. Will you be in your office in an hour?

ALDERMAN BOWERS. Will I? Will I? You
bet, and open wine!

(*Fowler exit with Miss Amelia.*)

ALDERMAN BOWERS.

Will I? Oh, will I? You bet your last dollar.

(*Putting the card and receipt in his pocket, he cannot control his laughter which becomes contagious among the guests.*)

Oh, throw a pail of water over me,
Somebody! Nothing short will quench this
fit.

"Call out the Fire Department! "Call
Three Sixes!"

Order another million feet of hose
That will not "bust," and play the whole
North River

Upon this conflagration of a fit,
Before it spreads and burns the town to
ashes!

A GUEST. What are you laughing at?

BOWERS. That all of you

Should laugh like me, without one knowing
why!

*(He makes his way out, stumbling against
several guests in his convulsion of laughter.)*

*(The guests hush on the entrance of Baldwin
and other students, black in complexion and gaudy
in attire. The Students sing, and as Pighead
returning, gesticulates to them to desist, Baldwin
apes a Musical Director in his face. The Stu-
dents imitate the act of drinking.)*

BALDWIN. Here's to woman, without who',
man —

STUDENTS. Drink it down, drink it down.

BALDWIN. Might an ape be, but no true man.

STUDENTS. Drink it down, drink it down.

BALDWIN.

She gives him his social trim,
Thereby making a man of him.

STUDENTS. Drink it down, drink it down,
drink it down.

PHELPS. (*Entering and lifting his hands in horror*).

Brethren! You shock me! I must leave.—
Goodnight.

(*Baldwin and the other students gather around him.*)

No! No! No use of talking. I came here
On the condition that you would help me
To push along the cause of Temperance
By turning down your glasses at the feast,
On the approach of Satan in the guise
Of a meek waiter, with his face smeared
over

With smiles in expectation of a tip;
But you no sooner get a whiff of wine
From breaths of people, welcoming your
coming,

Than you start up a drinking song, forsooth!
BALDWIN. The song is praise of woman and
not wine.

PHELPS.

Oh! Woman! Then repeat it. You can't
praise

Woman enough to please the Ministry;
For what would Churches be without her
presence?

Mere empty barracks where the devils' imps
Would howl to hear the echo of their laugh.

(*Several white ladies, students in disguise, who have been sitting among the guests, approach the singers and greet them cordially to the utter amazement of the bystanders.*)

PIGHEAD. Who hired this Glee Club?

GARDNER. (*coolly*).

They are our new members.

PIGHEAD. What!! (*stands dazed*).

GARDNER.

How you smile! That smile will spoil
their dreams,

Like a dark lantern in a burglar's hand.

MR. BOND. (*reappearing with Mrs. Bond*).

What is the matter?

PIGHEAD. (*pointing*).

These are our new members!!

PHELPS.

I thank you for the introduction, Sir,
And promise that we all will do our part
To make the Club swell — in its member-
ship.

(*Pighead and Bond stand dumfounded.*)

BALDWIN. Be seated. Over here there are
some seats.

(*They go in a bunch.*)

PHELPS. Now, not apart, as though you
thought yourselves

Superior beings.

MRS. BOND. (*in horror*). Bond!!

PHELPS. Be neighborly!

Thaw out society, which, at affairs
Of this description, is too oft a chill
That freezes men and women statuesque
In niches, here and there; when, just as
well,

It might be music and inspire a dance.

(*They sit among the white folks who arise
in indignation.*)

MR. BOND.

I know, my dear, but, if undiplomatic
In this small thing — remember!

MRS. BOND.

Oh, remember!

I have been hearing this till I am tired.
I hate to have a hand clapped on my mouth,
Whenever I desire to say a word.

Bond, put them out!

MR. BOND.

But dear, that might embarrass
The President! These people now have
freedom—

MRS. BOND.

Have you not told me, Bond, a thousand
times,

Their freedom is but bullion in the mint,
Meant only for inflation in the South?

MR. BOND.

No matter what I told you. If I anger
The Cabinet — what then? For nothing
gives

The President the sense of sweet relief,
Like an excuse for not appointing one
To any office that the many seek.

MRS. BOND.

“Many!” What many? Mean to tell
me, Bond,

That after you have given —

MR. BOND. Shu!

MRS. BOND. Forty thousand .

For the election of the President! —

The regular price for London — these your
words,

That there are "many?" *Any one but
you?*

MR. BOND. Don't mention that!

MRS. BOND. But I shall mention that!

MR. BOND.

Dear, if the women hear of it, one's chance
Grows less and less, for then the wife must
run

The gauntlet with her husband for the prize.

MRS. BOND.

John Henry Bond! do you doubt I possess
The dignity and social tact required
To represent America abroad?

MR. BOND.

No dear, if you would grace it with your
silence,
And now rehearse the grace.

MRS. BOND.

What, Bond, have me
Rehearse before these people? Are you
mad?

Not for the millions you assigned to me
Upon the night you thought that you might
fail,

Will I put up another day, or hour,
With your extravagance in politics!

MR. BOND. Dear, folks are listening.

MRS. BOND. Let them listen, Bond!

When Gip, the dear, I paid a thousand for,
Took sick one night with colic, would you go
To get a specialist? What if his fee
Were fifty dollars? Or, five hundred dol-
lars?

And when I changed his jewelled collaret
For one more decent — one that might
match mine —

You moped about provokingly all day;
But you pay forty thousand dollars, Bond,
For something you may never, never see.

BOND. (*whispering*).

Dear, what about your Chair of Poetry?

MRS. BOND. (*sharply*). Well, what about it?

BOND. Will you ever set

Your eyes upon it?

MRS. BOND. You just wait! just wait!

(*aside*). I wonder will the world think me
a fool,

Because I choose to play the simpleton
To break a promise, made without a
thought.

BOND. What did you say, my dear?

MRS. BOND. Oh, catch a woman

So foolish as not get her money's worth,

Or pay before hand, or not get a contract!

BOND. Dear, kindly say no more.

MRS. BOND. I will say more —

That you, Bond, shall not sign another
check

For this vile Club, this Stag abomination,
This Club that has become the rendezvous
Of Negroes and white women, lost to shame!

BOND. (*aside in despair*).

This is no human tongue, but devil's tail
Lashing in fury! She has swallowed him.
Poor devil! He has my commiseration.

MRS. BOND.

You have advanced too much already, sir!
Without a tittle of security.

MR. BOND. Why, dear, I have a mortgage on
the Club.

MRS. BOND. You have? When did you get it?

MR. BOND. Why last year.

MRS. BOND. Is it recorded?

MR. BOND. Yes.

MRS. BOND. Is it among
The papers that you have assigned to me?

MR. BOND. Why, certainly.

MRS. BOND.

Then, Bond, it is foreclosed,
And I demand possession instantly.

MR. BOND. But, dear —

MRS. BOND.

Bond, home! That is the only place
You can “dear” me. You blockhead,
dunderpate!

If these men want a Club, let them support
it!

Let them pay dues, or find some other fool.

MR. BOND. (*aside*).

Oh, fool of fools to have assigned my all!

MRS. BOND.

Out, everybody! I must have the key.
The smelling bottle. Oh, the smelling
bottle.

Oh, why, Bond, did you ever bring me here?

(*Mrs. Bond falls semi-conscious on the floor,
and the guests gather around.*)

BOND.

Back, please! Air, air! some air!

MRS. HAUGHTYHEAD. (*pushing through the crowd.*) O Mr. Bond,

Is your dear lady dead?

BOND. (*muttering.*) She's not that kind.

MRS. HAUGHTYHEAD. Her lips are moving.

What, dear, would you say?

MRS. BOND. (*faintly.*)

Always — put sugar — in — the milk —
for Gip:

Have me — cremated.

MR. BOND. (*fumbling in his pocket and mumbling*)

Sure! You did as much

For me — in life. Take this, it will re-
vive you.

MRS. BOND. (*resisting.*) No! No!

MR. BOND. (*muttering while holding her nose and administering a powder.*)

The driver knows his mule.

MRS. BOND. (*faintly.*) Oh! Oh!

MR. BOND. (*muttering.*)

Her foxy nature after every chase

That she gives me, resorts to such a feint;

But, this time, it will be the *real thing*,

At least for a few hours. I have to breathe.

MRS. HAUGHTYHEAD. (*bending over Mrs. Bond.*)

Her lips are moving. — What, dear, would
you say?

MRS. BOND.

Tell the cremator — to cut off — my hair —

And have — it made — a royal — fairy —
robe —

With train — for Gip — in time — for next
year's — Show.

(Mrs. Bond closes her eyes and the guests repeat her last request.)

MRS. HAUGHTYHEAD. Poor lady! She has
breathed her last.

MR. BOND. *(grimly)*. Oh, no!

She is a feline family — in lives.

(whispering to Pighead.)

Now is the chance I have been waiting for.

I shall be at your house in half an hour.

MRS. HAUGHTYHEAD. *(ogling Mr. Bond)*.

I must say that some men have wondrous
patience.

All evening, you have had my sympathy.

MR. BOND. *(with sarcasm)*.

Wait, Madam! Mrs. Bond is not yet cold.

*(He carries Mrs. Bond out with the aid of
the guests.)*

PIGHEAD. *(rising on a chair)*.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me explain.

Some thirteen names were recently proposed

For membership. The member who pro-
posed them,

Did not inform us they are colored men.

GARDNER. *(pleasantly)*.

Sir, by what by-law was I so required?

PIGHEAD.

The banquet is postponed, since, though
they see

They are not wanted, they do not withdraw,

Like gentlemen, but stay to raise disturbance.

(*Hastens out in Mr. Bond's direction*).

GARDNER. (*to the guests dispersing*).

Ladies and gentlemen! don't be alarmed!
There is no fire upon the premises,
But just a little smoke, blown through the
windows

From old Eureka College, set ablaze
With indignation at the Liberal Club
For Resolutions that were *hollow cant*.

PHELPS. (*leading*).

Having now avenged Eureka —

STUDENTS. Drink it down, drink it down.

PHELPS. Let us go and fill the beaker.

STUDENTS. Drink it down, drink it down.

PHELPS. Any man who does not double
For lost drinks, will get in trouble.

STUDENTS. Drink it down, drink it down, drink
it down.

PHELPS. He is all right!

SEVERAL STUDENTS. Who is all right?

STUDENTS. (*in chorus*). Paul Gardner!

PHELPS.

"The Epoch's glory and Eureka's pride"
Will now oblige.

STUDENTS. He will! he will! he will!

GARDNER.

A word, then. Gentlemen, you have done
well,

Not only that you have avenged with spirit
Your Alma Mater, but that you, in driving
The Public Mind to pasture, have not led

Where poison ivy might become its cud.
The moral of your merriment to-night
Is that it is a foolish, futile thing
To try to shape Society by codes,
Vetoed by Nature. Nature trumpets forth
No edict through the instinct of a race,
Proclaiming certain territory hers
And warning all encroaching Powers there-
from,

Without the ordering out of her reserves
To see to it, the edict is enforced.
Let politics keep off forbidden shores.
The larger purport of your play, dear friends,
Is to awake the White Intelligence,
The god-like genius that, on having brought
This Western World from out the chaos
dark

Of waters and of woody wilderness,
And shaped it into hills of hope for Man,
Must providence its beautiful Creation
With altruistic love and tenderness;
So that all tribes of men, what e'er the hue,
Have each a hill, where it can touch the
Star

That it has followed with its mental growth.
(*The students applaud*).

We are due at Eureka, Gentlemen.
(*They fall over each other to get in line and
follow Gardner, and, as they make their way
through the curious guests who have lingered, or
come back, they utter the College cry.*)

Eureka! Ha! Ha! Ha! Eureka! Ha! Ha!
Eureka! Eureka! Eureka! Ha! Ha! Ha!

ACT V

(*Mr. Pighead's Reception-room and office, as in the third Act. The gas-light is dim, and Becky is in a chair in a reverie.*)

BECKY.

Perhaps — Maybe — More likely — Probably —

Still, possibly — Oh, making nothing but A pin and needle cushion of my heart!

Dear Fred! I shall take refuge in your song.

(*She kisses the copy, sits down at the piano and rehearses the air.*)

DINAH. (*entering robed for departure.*)

Miss Becky,

I'se goin'. 'Good Lor' knows I'se sorry.

BECKY.

Wait till the morning, Dinah. By that time, father will have forgotten all about the shoes, if you only get the boy to have them shined.

DINAH.

I'se afraid to stay, Miss Becky! I'se afraid!

Every night dare is strange noises in your father's room.

BECKY. Nonsense!

DINAH. Maybe! but still I'se goin'. But, first —

(*She raises the gas-light to a full blaze and hurries out of the room.*)

BECKY. The creature is demented!

DINAH. (*returns with a long handled duster.*)

No spider is goin' to have de laugh on me,
And say, I'se here, but Dinah, she am
gone!

(After dusting the ceiling.)

I'se a clean woman, Miss Becky, but your
father, he stan' here an' look up dar!

BECKY. Oh! that is when he is thinking.

DINAH.

Maybe, but I don't want Mr. Pighead
tinking cob-webs whar dey ought not be.

BECKY. Has father paid you for this month?

DINAH. No, Miss Becky.

He say come round next week, just like he
say to de man what brought de flowers. I'll
be here *furst*.

BECKY. Wait till the morning and I will get
you your money.

DINAH.

O Lor' knows you is good, Miss Becky!
and if you ever get married, send for me, no
matter how old I'se grown or crooked with de
rhumatiz; for I'se right smart in handling little
ones. I'll save you doctor's bills, for I has
Mammy's sure cure for de measles and de mumps.

BECKY. *(laughing)*. O certainly, Dinah! If
I ever am so foolish!

DINAH.

Zackly what I say to-night, dough I put
round de clock to haste de time for meetin'
Sam. I will be back den.

BECKY. Must you go out to-night, Dinah?

DINAH.

Sure, Miss Becky! I could not stay in

to-night for all de worl' for Sam is goin' to have de ring for me. It has a pearl stone in it dat prevents de misery; else, to tell the tru' I'd stay right home to-night, cause I put de salt 'sted of de sugar in my tea.

BECKY. If you must go, return early.

(Exit Dinah and Becky plays and sings.)

WHEN LOVE LAY DEAD BETWEEN US

Oh, Love, whose wild delight was
To take our hands and soar
To regions where no night was,
But only morn' before,—
One day grew pale of features,
At something idly said,
And best of all God's creatures
Lay there between us, dead.

We could not turn our faces
From Love upon the bier;
Love there with all his graces,
Except one word to cheer!
I bent and kissed him madly;
You kissed him, too, and then,
Up, up, he rose and gladly
Snatched us to Heaven again.

(Fowler disguised as a colored gentleman enters unperceived by Becky and repeats the last two lines in a different key).

FOWLER. There should not be a discord in a love song.

BECKY. *(who has risen from the piano in amazement).* Well, sir!

FOWLER.

Yes, very well indeed, except
A heartache, now and then; but what ails
you that you are not this evening at
the banquet?

BECKY. Are not you, sir, in the wrong house?

FOWLER. Guess not.

Now, don't let me disturb your exercises.

Do you admire the music of the future?

BECKY. What is your business, sir?

FOWLER. My business, Miss?

Ask rather for my father's. Would it be
In proper form for me, a well bred youth,
To have an occupation? When our Sires
Have piled "the dust" up, should we, too,
be moles?

If I should ask you, what your business is,
Would you not take offense? And justly
so;

And is a gentleman less sensitive?

Oh! when will men have equal rights with
women?

BECKY. (*Arousing from the spell of his glance*).

Please leave the house.

FOWLER.

Be patient. Is not patience

As charming in a woman, as a dimple

In which her beauty vainly tries to hide?

BECKY. Vacate this house, or I shall summon
help.

FOWLER.

You shock me, positively shock me, Miss!

I should as soon have thought a girl would
let

Her garter snap, and trail the ground with
meal,

As let her temper loose.

BECKY. The door! the door!

FOWLER.

I know, Miss, where it is — I found it open.

O Lady, how can you so soon forget

Your Vassar Valedictory? Did you

Not call out for the day — and oh! so
sweetly

That it must needs be deaf not to respond!—

When there will be but one class in the
land,

And that the cultured; when fair graduates
Of Vassar will feel holy exultation

In being chosen by black bachelors

Of Yale, Eureka, Harvard, or Cornell,

To lead with them the march to Human
Oneness?

I heard you, Lady! I was at the door,

One of the ushers. You fired me with love
For culture that, thereby, I might some
day

Ask you to lead with me that glorious
march.

Your father, I am sure, will not object.—

BECKY. (*amused*).

Why not go see him?

FOWLER.

Left him at the Club

Where he informed me, you felt indisposed.

BECKY. Told you?

FOWLER.

Yes, — adding that you were at home.

BECKY. What! Why have you come here?

FOWLER. A social call.

BECKY. On me?

FOWLER.

Yes. How could you, a lady, call

On me, a bachelor? That would start
gossip.

BECKY. Out! Out!

FOWLER. (*kneeling*). O angel of my life! hear
me.

BECKY. (*in distress*). Oh! call some other
time.

FOWLER. Thanks for that hope.

Let not your soul run, like a timid mouse,
Back to the hole, but play awhile, respon-
sive

To the low music of my throbbing heart.

May I not take your hand?

BECKY. (*shrinking from him*). Help! Father!
help!

FOWLER. Would he were here to help me plead
my cause!

BECKY. Help! Help!

FOWLER. Be calm, Beck! It is I, Fred.

BECKY. What!

FOWLER. (*singing in his natural voice*).

Were Fate to change my face, Love,
And blight my fortune, too,
Would you your steps retrace, Love,
Or would you still be true?

BECKY. (*aside*). His eyes.

FOWLER. Beck, am I still in the dark to you?

BECKY.

You dreadful fellow! I shall never, never
Forgive you.

FOWLER. Yes, you will.

BECKY. I never shall.

My heart is in my mouth.

FOWLER. (*attempting to kiss her*).

And so is mine.

BECKY. (*drawing away*).

How dare you?

FOWLER.

Why, Beck, that our hearts might touch.

BECKY. Do you forget, Fred Fowler, how we
parted?

FOWLER.

No, come to think; but, still, it was in-
spiring.

Wrote "Love Lay Dead Between Us" on
the train.

How do you like it?

BECKY. Quite *imaginative*,

If you think I make up so easily.

FOWLER. You have no need to make up.

BECKY. Keep your jokes.

This fright to-night, Fred, I will not con-
done.

(*Turns away.*)

FOWLER. (*following her*).

Love and forgiveness are a woman's eyes;
She cannot ope the one and shut the other,
Then stand before the mirror of her heart

Without a laugh, or shudder. You just try;

I dare you! Smile, Beck! smile! You do not now

Recall my Love the blacker that you look.

BECKY.

Bold, I must say! Now tell me, honor bright,

Were you expelled from College for an act
That you would think disgraceful?

FOWLER. Certainly not.

BECKY. Fred, honor bright?

FOWLER. Beck, honor bright.

BECKY. I knew it.

FOWLER.

I was miles off that night, at Gardner's house,

Consulting him regarding mother's chair
of Poetry.

BECKY.

Indeed! The man who wrote
That "one cannot wed Art and Woman both
And hope for heaven on earth?"

FOWLER. Oh, as for that,

I have converted him, and he agrees
With me now, that, however miserable
A man may be with woman, he is worse,
A thousand, thousand, thousand times
without her.

BECKY.

I must forgive him, I suppose! But, Fred
Why did you not come sooner to relieve
My awful state of mind concerning you?

FOWLER.

You were the first I called on, certainly!
But, dear, your father met me at the door
Like the stone lion there, become alive,
And tore me piecemeal. Beck, I was provoked,
And only that he was you father — well,
No matter. He was frank enough, declaring
That he preferred a dark affinity
For you. — How could I help but color up?
Get ready, Beck. I have a cab outside
To fetch us to Eureka.

BECKY. Where, Fred? Where?

FOWLER. I promised mother I would not leave college
Without obtaining a degree.

BECKY. Why, Fred,
How a degree, when you have been expelled?

FOWLER. The Rector will give it by marrying us. —

A.B. A Benedict.

BECKY. A. B. A Bride.

FOWLER.

Good, good! I did not think of that.
Why, Beck,
You will be the first woman, who has ever
Been granted a degree at old Eureka,
Which is so much afraid of woman's wit,
It shuts its doors on her, and is so fearful
Of woman's tongue, it sneaks beneath the
platform

And kicks up like a mule to smash the planks,

Rather than cope with her in eloquence.

BECKY. But will the Rector —

FOWLER. Why, of course, he will,

So long as I am Black! We take no chance

But ride directly to the Alderman.

BECKY. With your face black?

FOWLER. Yes.

BECKY. Not for all the world.

FOWLER. Then Beck, for greater than the world, for love!

(He attempts to kiss her, but she breaks away with a peal of laughter.)

BECKY.

No, no! How queer you look! Would not believe

That it is you, excepting for your eyes.

FOWLER.

I thought your father would have blackened them.

(They hear the outer door slam).

BECKY. Fred, Father!

FOWLER. Swallow me, O floor!

BECKY. His slam

When anything goes wrong. Here, here, in here.

(She opens the bookcase and Fowler enters the compartment designed by Mr. Pighead for his unseen witnesses. She closes the door but not completely. Mr. Pighead appears and walks up and down the room several times without uttering a word.)

PIGHEAD. Was anybody here?

BECKY. (*hesitating a moment*).

Yes, Mr. Lamb,

The Butcher.

PIGHEAD.

What the deuce brought him?

BECKY. The bill.

PIGHEAD.

The rascal! He it was, who organized
"The Anti-Dead-Beat Club of the Thirteenth Ward"

Against me, when a candidate for Congress,

And, when I was defeated, roared at me
From out his vehicle, "he had got square!"

One payment is enough for any bill.—

Was there nobody else here?

(*The bell rings*).

BECKY. (*going out*). There's the bell.

PIGHEAD.

Bond, I suppose. Good I got home in time.

BOND. (*entering*). Pighead you are a lucky dog.

PIGHEAD. How so?

BOND. You are not married.

PIGHEAD. Hem!

BOND. Your daughter?

PIGHEAD. (*muttering*). Niece.

BOND. (*approaching the bookcase for greater secrecy*.)

Safe here?

PIGHEAD. Beck, go up stairs.

BOND. Here is the Will.
Be quick about it. It must be put back
Into the safe before my wife awakes,—
An hour at most.

PIGHEAD. How would a codicil,
Cutting her scapegrace off and making you
Sole legatee —

BOND. I am no hog.

PIGHEAD. I know,
But Mr. Bond, are you aware the fool
Intends to slur his father's honored name
By throwing his inheritance away
To the four winds?

BOND. Let him! Damn him, let him!
All I want is my own — what, in the fume
Of panicky parisis, I assigned
To Mrs. Bond, and could not then get
back

On the regaining of my normal mind.

PIGHEAD.

But Mr. Bond, this is the simplest way.

BOND. The simplest hell! What! wait until
she dies,

A woman who can pass through three
train wrecks,

And five hotels in flames without a scratch!
You promised expedition, now make good.

PIGHEAD. Where are the papers?

BOND. (*after a pause*).

In her boudoir safe,

On top of which she has her sharp-eyed
cur,

That never will forgive me for a kick.

PIGHEAD. You must get them.

BOND. Must?

PIGHEAD. Must, and quickly.

BOND. Hell!

PIGHEAD.

As for the mortgage on the Liberal Club,

I thought it policy, not to record it,—

BOND. Good, good!! you are a brick.—

PIGHEAD. And thought it wise

To make myself the assignee.

BOND. What!

PIGHEAD. Yes,

But there is now no time to talk of that.

The papers! Get the papers!

BOND. In an hour,

Though I have to choke the cur to get at them.

(He starts followed to the door by Pighead).

PIGHEAD

Meanwhile, I shall fix up the codicil,—

(He returns and gazes up at the ceiling).

Including a provision to ensure

Due compensation for my services.

(Walks up and down).

A million is my mark. A million! million!

If he should question that amount, what then?

No probate of the Will! I have him there.

A million! Oh, a million! If to gurgle

The mere word million, million, gives delight,

How much more exquisite, more ravishing,

The pleasure from the substance in the hand!

Rebecca! — But no matter. Never mind.

BECKY. (*Entering with anxious look*).

What is it, Pa?

PIGHEAD.

Oh, nothing! — save to say,

Rebecca, it was well you did not come

This evening to the Club. Another proof

Of woman's intuition! Think of it!!

The rascal! rascal!

(*Takes a flower pot and dashes it against the book case concealing Fowler.*)

BECKY. (*in alarm*). Father!

PIGHEAD. Crazy poet!

Who has black men made members of the Club!

BECKY. Who, Pa?

PIGHEAD. (*savagely*). Paul Gardner.

BECKY. Oh! and is that all?

PIGHEAD. That all!

BECKY. I thought that something dreadful happened.

PIGHEAD.

What could be dreadfuller than having blacks,

And educated ones, which makes the case Incalculably worse, made full fledged members

Of the great Liberal Club, "to make it swell

In membership," as they already boast?

BECKY. (*timidly*). Maybe they are not black.

PIGHEAD. Beck, am I blind?

(Tumbles the chairs).

BECKY. *(excitedly).*

It does not hurt their feelings, Pa, but mine
To toss the chairs about.

*(Lifts the chairs and places them between the
bookcase and her father.)*

Oh, I don't know

What I am doing! Let them stay there!

PIGHEAD. *(dashing another flower-pot against
the bookcase.)*

Rascal!

BECKY. *(hysterically).*

The flowers have not offended! How can I
Now deck your client's cell?

PIGHEAD. Oh, to the Devil

With such a client!

BECKY. Pa!

PIGHEAD. He lied to me!

He said that he had friends! Yet, not a
black

Of them but wants to see his dangling
corpse,

Rather than give a dime for his defense.

(Tumbles the chairs.)

BECKY. *(piteously).*

Pa! Hear the neighbors opening their win-
dows.

PIGHEAD.

The Liberal Club is ruined! ruined! ruined!
And in the debris lies my chance forever
Of an appointment to the Bench, except
I reach the President without delay

And stab Bond with his wife; then, plainly
show

The recognition due the Liberal Club
Belongs by right to me, who am its brains.
Shall I start now for Washington, or wait
For Bond's return and finish up that job?

BECKY. Go now — if you think best.

PIGHEAD. I was not talking

To you. — Head, take next train; tail, wait
till morning.

(Tosses the coin in the air.)

Confound it, Beck! Where did that dollar
roll?

BECKY. *(in opposite direction).*

I think somewhere in here, Pa.

PIGHEAD. No, in there.

*(Pighead tosses the furniture and stoops near
where Fred is hiding. Becky after hesitating
a moment in distress, turns off the gas.)*

PIGHEAD. Am I an owl, Beck?

BECKY. Pshaw! Turned it too far.

I thought you needed stronger light to see
Where it had rolled too.

PIGHEAD. Always thinking wrong.

Get me a match.

BECKY.

There is not one upstairs.

PIGHEAD. Go down and get one.

BECKY.

There are mice downstairs.

Pa, will you come with me? Come, you
go first.

(Puts her hand on his shoulder.)

PIGHEAD. (*starting*). Why did you turn the gas off, anyway?

Beck, you are always doing foolish things.

BECKY. Not always, Pa.

PIGHEAD. (*sharply and turning back*)

Beck, go up to your room.

BECKY. Why Pa?

PIGHEAD. (*nervously*). Go, go, I tell you,

Beck. Go! Go!

I want to think and I must be alone.

BECKY. Shall I bring down a match?

PIGHEAD. No, darkness suits

My mood now.

BECKY. Let me fix the room a little.

PIGHEAD. (*snapping*).

How can you fix the room up in the dark?

(*Becky retires reluctantly, and Mr. Pighead walks to and fro. He soon hisses out his words, heightening his tone as he proceeds; and, toward the end of the passage, he clutches, strangles and with all his might jumps upon the victim — in imagination.*)

Now, now, I have him in my gladdening clutch.

Earth is too small for both of us. A clause Cutting him off, shall be put in that Will, Whether Bond wants, or not. So they have talked

Over and over, how, when free to use His fortune, they will start by being just To the last dollar! Which means simply that

They will insist upon a full accounting

For these last fifteen years, and ruin me,
When I become Chief Justice! Aye, Chief
Justice!

For I shall now mislay this testament,
And not be able to recover it,
Till Bond agrees in writing — word be
damned! —

To get the Trusts, which are omnipotent,
And foreordain the Judges, like the Laws,
To say the word for me, that cannot fail.
But then to be dragged down! Oh, for
a bit

Of seasoned meat to throw across the fence
Into his kennel, and to watch him bloat,
Through a safe chink! No sunrise such
a sight!!

Ha, dog, you bark at me? Have you nosed
out

With your mean dog intelligence, what
Beck

Could not with all her woman's intuition,
That I am not her father? And the flow-
ers,

In such profusion, never were designed
To deck a cell, but be our nuptial bower?
Ha! Ha! you show your fangs! you show
your fangs!

Oh, I will tear you, tear you, limb from
limb,

And crush you, crush you into maggot
food!!

BECKY. *(entering alarmed by the noise she has heard).*

Oh, Father! what is it that you have done?
Oh, I would rather, yes, a thousand times,
That you had murdered me! had murdered me!

PIGHEAD. (*cooling from his excitement*)

Beck, Beck, what ails you? —

BECKY. (*sobbing*).

Murdered me — me — me!

Where is he? Oh! where is he? Not a
moan;

Still, he may not be dead. A doctor, quick!

PIGHEAD.

Beck, are you crazy? I was only dreaming.
I dozed a moment, and I thought a dog,
That had been following me life-long,
Had sprung upon me with a savage growl.
We grappled, but at length I caught his
throat,

Choked him and crushed his brains out
with my heel.

BECKY. Oh, nothing all this night but frights
for me!

Come, father, to your room and go to bed.
Your dozing shows how badly you need
rest.

PIGHEAD. I am awake now. Did you find
that dollar?

BECKY. No, Pa, but Dinah will before she
goes.

PIGHEAD.

She will, of course! the question is, will I?
If she should limp, make her take off her
shoe.

BECKY.

Pa! You know well that Dinah, when
she found

The twenty dollar bill last Sunday morning,
Did not purloin it, though you then accused
The poor girl of the theft.

PIGHEAD. The cunning creature!

She put it in the Bible where she knew
That I would never look.

BECKY. Be just to her,—

She put it there till she got through her
cleaning.

PIGHEAD.

Oh, "just" again! Rebecca! why use "just"
So often when addressing me of late?

BECKY. Father, what do you mean?

PIGHEAD. What do you mean?

My mind was never clearer in my life,
And it has never had such need to be.
I must at once draw up a document
That duly signed by Bond, will, veritably,
Make me Chief Justice.

BECKY. (*kissing him*).

Oh, what glorious news!

How happy, happy, father! —

PIGHEAD. Oh, call me

Father no longer!

BECKY. (*smiling*). Well, then, Mr. Justice!

PIGHEAD.

God! — come upstairs, Beck! I must tell
you all —

That your real name is Lovehart.

BECKY. What!!

PIGHEAD. Come, come.

Put out the hall-light; those gas companies
Are highway robbers.

BECKY

My real name is Lovehart?

PIGHEAD.

Help me upstairs and you will then, learn
all.

Put out the light.

BECKY. (*For Fred's hearing*). I shall come
down again.

(*Becky helps Mr. Pighead upstairs and Fowler coming out of the bookcase moves around the room cautiously.*)

FOWLER.

What an eternity within that tomb,
With devils raging round! for he is many;
But, then, what joy to feel I was immune
From peril, by the grace of woman's wit!
So he is not her father, but a fraud,
And wants to marry her! The gall of it
Stifles me breathless; and his plot to
change

My mother's Will, and cut the "scape-
grace off,

"Whether Bond wants, or not!" The
villian! still

I owe him thanks; for 't is to his fore-
thought

I am indebted for a hiding place
In time of peril, and the private box
At his great exhibition of himself.

The devil's cunning always is his gibbet.
He swings himself without an angel's help,
As hangman. Oh, Divine economy!
(*He listens at the door.*)

What, if the wretch attempt foul means?
I stay.

I do not leave this house to-night without
her.

(*Pauses.*) Oh, how I wish that Beck would
hurry down!

For ere I put the Rector to the test,
Must go to Gip's assistance at the safe.
One dog should help another.—O ye
Lawyers!

Ye tools of each and every infamy
Against the public and the private weal!
Ye clogs upon the axis of the world,
In her rotation from the night to day!

(*Pauses.*)

Make haste, make haste, Love! Time! un-
yoke your oxen
And hitch a span of lightnings to your wain.
How devilish long it takes a girl to dress!
But here she comes, the pink of all per-
fections!

(*Dinah enters from the hall, and seeing Fowler, shakes the house with her screech. Fowler glides into the back room. Mr. Pighead, coming down stairs with a rush, bumps against Dinah and pushes her further into the parlor.*)

PIGHEAD. What is the matter?

DINAH. (*Moaning.*)

Saw de ghost of Mose!

PIGHEAD. Rot! crazy! crazy!

DINAH. No Sair, I'se not crazy.

It was de ghost of Mose, sure as I'se born!
He said he would come back, Sair, if I took
A ring from cousin Sam. Off, off it comes!
I care not for "de misery" — Off! Off!

(Takes it off).

Now, out, out, out de window,—or de door,
Forever! Mose, if you is here, look! look!

*(She goes to the parlor door, intending to escape,
but shudders back and lets out an unearthly shriek
at the sight of Fowler, who snatches the ring and
passes through the hall into the street.)*

DINAH. O save me, save me, Sair, from Moses'
ghost!

*(She clings to Mr. Pighead who cannot shake
her off).*

PIGHEAD. *(in a voice indicating altered atti-
tude toward Becky).*

A match, Rebecca!

DINAH. *(seeing Becky hastening in Fowler's
direction).*

Dar, dar, dar she goes!

PIGHEAD. *(furious at Becky's departure).*

Rebecca! Oh, let go, let go, you hussy!

DINAH. Won't, won't nohow! nohow!

PIGHEAD. *(fiercely).* Damn you, let go,
Or I will choke you.

DINAH. No, nohow! you want

To follow her and shut me in alone.

You won't nohow! Help! Murder!

PIGHEAD. Outch!

DINAH.

Don't try to choke me den! Or dis hat pin
Will go in all de way and find your heart.

(Mr. Pighead becomes docile through terror and makes no further attempt to break from Dinah, so that the lovers are afforded ample time to reach Alderman Bowers' office.)

MR. BOND. *(entering).*

The hall door open and the gas not lit,—
That's kinder strange. Where are you,
Pighead?

PIGHEAD. *(faintly).* Here.

(Mr. Bond lays down his packages on a chair and, striking a match, lights the gas).

MR. BOND.

Well, by the Jumping Ginger! what is this?
And you the one I thought the lucky dog!!

PIGHEAD. *(excitedly).* This frenzied woman —

BOND. Keep your tale of woe,

I have domestic troubles of my own.

PIGHEAD. But Mr. Bond! this negress —

BOND. Oh, I see, —

This your dark lady?

PIGHEAD. *(furious).* No!

BOND. Of course, *deny it,*

Lie like a gentleman. Nothing preserves
Respectability like strong denials.

How long do you intend to keep me waiting?

PIGHEAD. This woman has a hatpin in her
hand!

BOND. A hatpin! — Oh! then she has my
respect.

DINAH. (*releasing Pighead*).

He tried to guzzle me and shut me up.

BOND.

You should know better, Mr. Pighead,
then

Ever to try to shut a woman up.

Postpone this tryst! I came here to trans-
act

Important business that may take all night.

(*Stoops and picks up the coin*).

Here, take this dollar, — better in your
hand

Than on the floor.

(*While Dinah is taking the dollar, Pighead
snatches the hatpin and breaks it.*)

PIGHEAD. Now you get out of here.

DINAH. I'se goin', Mr. Pighead! I's goin'.

You can take out this dollar from my wages.

(*She withdraws sidewise with her eyes on Pig-
head*).

PIGHEAD. (*apologetically*).

The Crazy creature! thought she saw a
spook.

BOND. (*untying his package*).

Good acting! but 'tis no affair of mine.

(*Pighead starts for the door but is grabbed back
by Bond*).

PIGHEAD. I want to find my niece.

BOND. Oh, to the devil

With nieces! Did I come here for your
pleasure?

Here are the papers — by the Jumping
Ginger!!

PIGHEAD. What is the trouble?

BOND.

Jumping Ginger! Look!!

(Bond rattles the papers in Pighead's face without giving him a chance to glance at them.)

Rubbish! all rubbish! Not a deed, nor mortgage

In all the garbage I have donkeyed here!

PIGHEAD. Look well. Some papers there may be of value.

BOND. Value — Hell! This, a contract for a tomb

Of pure Italian marble for her dog;
This for green shades in the feline hospital,
And this — Ha! for a Chair of Poetry
Not to exceed the sum of fifty dollars,
Including the expressage! Muck! all muck!

(He scatters the papers on the floor.)

PIGHEAD. How did it happen?

BOND. Oh, I grabbed the stuff

And, like a man with green goods, "never looked!!".

Just like a man with green goods, "never looked!!"

(In uttering the last line, his tone is one of mingled agony and amazement at his stupidity)

(He walks to and fro briskly.)

No freedom for this fool! this fool of fools!
My life is like a squirrel in the cage,
For every bar I touch to make escape,
But whirls me round the faster! Get me out!

PIGHEAD. Hem! Hem! I have been thinking
seriously

Over the matter that we have discussed.

BOND. Oh, to the devil with your thinking!
Act!

PIGHEAD. It is a dark transaction, Mr. Bond!
I feel compunction. Get somebody else.

BOND. Damn it! What is your figure for the
job?

PIGHEAD. (*after hesitating*).
A million.

BOND. Cents?

PIGHEAD.

No; dollars. In addition,

I want your influence to get the Trusts
To make me the Chief Justice.

BOND. Jumping Ginger!
Pighead, do you know what I think of you?

PIGHEAD. That matters little.

BOND. You are crazy!!

PIGHEAD. No,

But am a politician just got wise

To opportunities, I once let slip

Through ignorance, or undeveloped nerve.

Let us now put it down in black and white.

BOND. You rascal!

PIGHEAD.

There are two of us, I guess.

BOND. (*After a long disdainful look at Pighead*).

I had two packages. Where is the other?

Laid it somewhere here when I struck the
match.

(*Searches a few moments and finding it on a chair, lifts it exultantly.*)

Ha! Ha! No fool! I knew I was no fool
To leave what I was after, and seize only
The rubbish.

PIGHEAD. What is that?

BOND. (*surprised*). Another Will!

PIGHEAD. The date —

BOND. Last March —

PIGHEAD. Signed —

BOND. Signed —

PIGHEAD. And witnessed?

BOND. Witnessed.

PIGHEAD. Luck!

BOND. I should say so. Graces! Jumping
Ginger!

Well, after this, I give up all attempt
At sounding woman nature.

PIGHEAD. (*with misgivings and reaching for the paper*). Why?

BOND. Hands off! —

An ocean plummet is too short by leagues.
(*reading*).

I, Harriet Fowler Bond, in the full enjoyment
of all my senses, in proof whereof I attach the
sworn certificates of two distinguished members
of the medical profession, wishing to dispose of
my possessions, real and personal, according
to my judgment, make this disposition my last
Will and Testament.

My Soul, I am ready at any moment to give
back to its Maker who has been so lavish of
His blessings to me and mine, expressing the

hope that He will deal as mercifully with me, as I have always tried to deal with others, even with the least of his creatures.

I bequeath to my beloved husband, John Henry Bond, with whom my life has been uninterrupted happiness, all the stocks, bonds, deeds, mortgages and holdings of every description specified hereinafter, that he has ever assigned me out of the goodness of his heart; and in addition, I bequeath to him, my beloved husband, one-third of my real and personal estate, excepting my cottage at Newport, my pet collie, Gip, and my jewels, which I give with my benediction to my affectionate son, Frederick Fowler, and the lady whom he selects to be his bride.

I bequeath to my beloved husband, John Henry Bond, the third of my real and personal property, as aforesaid, on the condition that, if he should marry again, it shall be to the woman whom, on my account, he divorced on testimony which, judging from the utterances in his sleep on three distinct occasions, was manufactured by his attorney, one John Henry Pighead."

PIGHEAD. (*sarcastically*).

Is that to be a record of the Court?

BOND.

"The residue of my estate, real and personal, I bequeath to my son, Frederick Fowler, with the request that he will erect an annex to the Feline Hospital founded by his mother, and that he will take her place on the Board of Directors."

HARRIET FOWLER BOND.

"We believe that the testatrix of the Will to which we herewith subscribe ourselves as witnesses, is in the full enjoyment of all her senses.

GALL PRICE, M.D.

LAUDANUM PHIAL, M.D.

PIGHEAD.

Fiel I can break that Will. The witnesses,
Shrewdly enough give testimony only
As to her senses. How significant,
No word as to the soundness of her mind!

BOND. (*folding up the will*).

Her mind is sound; 't is flawless, like her
jewels.

The will suits me. It gives me back my
own

And in addition —

PIGHEAD. Names whom you must wed.

BOND.

'T is no compulsion where the heart is willing.
One grows acquainted with the first wife's
worth

By contrast with the second's.

PIGHEAD. You treat lightly

A matter awful in its consequences;
For, were this Will made public, we would
be

Excoriated, ostracized for life!!

BOND.

We ought to be, Damn it, we ought to be!

PIGHEAD. But, Sir, my reputation! reputation!!

BOND.

Your reputation!! Throw it in quicklime.
The stench is fearsome.

PIGHEAD. Sir, this my reward?—

BOND. Must get these in the safe before she wakes.

(Taking all his papers, Bond hurries off. Pig-head, dumfounded, gazes up at the ceiling and then walks up and down the floor. Though Rebecca's name does not escape his lips, her flight with its possible consequences to him contributes potently to his new determination.)

PIGHEAD.

You and your ilk, Bond! will yet feel my hand.

I must not and I will not fail. This brain
Shall be no longer powder on the ground,
To flare without report, but charge a
purpose,

A mighty cannon that will wake the world.
The Negro has no memory of wrong;
I shall supply him with that memory,
So help me, God! Ah, then my smile *will*
be

“Like a dark lantern in a burglar's hand,”
And spoil the dreams of many! All the
Black

Requires is intellect to plan for him
The battle with the mob, and iron will
Of the Dictator, both to guide his rage
In the wild hour of triumph, and to build
An empire, as enduring as the hills.

(He moves toward the bower).

I have the intellect! I have the will!
'Tellect!! The will!! and now, so help me
—Ough!

(He suddenly falls with a groan against the bower, crushing it, his protracted excitement, superinduced by the drainage of his mental resources in concocting his last nefarious scheme to gain power, having culminated in a paralytic seizure.)

ACT VI

(An observatory with telescopes, computing table and other appropriate belongings. Rector Wisdom is gazing through the telescope and does not heed the knock at the door.)

GARDNER. *(entering)*.

Good morning, Rector! Wis, good morning!

RECTOR WISDOM. *(without turning from his observation)*. Shul

If you are drowsy, go to bed.

GARDNER. *(after a pause)*.

Good morning!

RECTOR WISDOM.

Oh, Paul! I thought you were the Curate.

— Look!

(He makes place for Gardner at the telescope).

What do you see?

GARDNER. *(after a pause)*.

Old Mars, as red with rage

As ever, at the earth for her bad manners

In not acknowledging his bow to her,

Signal for signal.

RECTOR WISDOM. Is that all you see?

GARDNER.

I see the Spirit flinging stars like seed

Before Him by the handful, right and left,

And leaving not — oh, anywhere in space,

Mind, heart, or soul — a dark without a star!

RECTOR WISDOM. *(returning to the telescope)*.

Still at your poetry! not much of late.

GARDNER.

Not in the hackneyed form, I must concede;

For now my language, in exultant moods,
Is action to arouse the world from sleep,
Rather than hand-clap rhyme to please
the child;

But how about the Pleaides, old boy?
Has she who hid for shame for having
loved

A mortal, reappeared?

RECTOR WISDOM. I make the comet
My special study.

GARDNER.

Always the divine!

You seek the erring, even among the stars.
Say, what about the one with the squir-
rel's tail?

I read somewhere about it.

RECTOR WISDOM. That is mine.

GARDNER. (*taking his hand*).

Congratulation! Let me see it, Wis!
Where shall I look for it?

(*Goes to the telescope*).

RECTOR WISDOM. In right ascension,

Two hours and fifty minutes, plus one
second.

GARDNER. Yes! but it seems the tail without
the squirrel.

RECTOR WISDOM.

The body is beneath it; you must look
With your imagination through the lens.
I base my claim to this discovery,
Not on the tail which any one can view,
But on the body, which I am the first
To predicate, and which must soon appear.

(*He looks through the telescope.*)

In my first calculation, I was wrong
By only half a second, which was due
To the disturbance by the College bell.

GARDNER. The College bell! What time was it?

RECTOR WISDOM. Near dawn.

GARDNER. What was the matter?

RECTOR WISDOM. Oh, that crazy hazing
Which Fowler, whom you wrote about,
conducted —

GARDNER. Fred Fowler was —

RECTOR WISDOM. (*impatiently*).

Why, Paul! the Curate heard

One of the others there call him by name.

GARDNER.

It was his astral presence, then; but, say,
A thought occurs. Was hazing at the hour
That you descried the comet, not, at least,
A strange coincidence? Who knows, old
boy!

But that it was the comet you descried,
Which influenced the youths to make the
break

From discipline? If stars shed influence,
Why not the comets? Think it over, Wis.

(*Gardner is inspired to propose this theory by his sense of humor in order to put the Rector in a pleasant frame of mind to listen to a defense of the Students; but, when he observes that the idea makes an impression on the Rector, he seeks to strengthen it with argumentation, recalling Sir William Hamilton's testimony that the philosopher*

finds it hard to overcome the temptation of associating his name with a fallacious theory, rather than with none at all. The effect on the Rector is not avowed by him, but it acts subconsciously throughout the rest of the Play, appealing to his pride as a philosopher as well as a scientist, and to some extent influencing his action.)

Have wars and plagues not been concomitant

With comets in all ages and all climes?

May there not be as much in such belief,

As in ghost stories, that some scientists

Find ground enough for psychical research?

RECTOR WISDOM. (*impressed*). Well!

GARDNER.

I am serious. What colossal Fames

Are pedestaled on gossamers as thin!

RECTOR WISDOM. Quite true.

GARDNER.

Why not propound the notion, Wis,

That comets are the cause of earth's disorders?

Say! Say! Would that not *ease the human conscience*

And soon ensure a mighty following?

Propound the notion boldly! boldly! boldly!

It will connect Eureka's name forever,

As well as yours, not merely with one comet,

But with all comets, and, old boy, exalt

Our Alma Mater in the world of thought.

RECTOR WISDOM. There may be something,

Paul, in what you say.

GARDNER. 'Tis something to have been a
pioneer
In any field of science, though unique
In one's assumptions. There is nothing
new
Under the sun. Try, therefore, what may
be
Under the comet, which draws us through
regions
The sun has never traveled, and is never
Likely to travel.

RECTOR WISDOM. (*lifting his hand*). Words!
Words!

GARDNER. Hardly! Has
The sun yet shed a ray upon the problem
Of Evil in the world? The comet may,
Since proven, as it does, that what may
seem
Sheer lawlessness in our sidereal space,
Is still the working out of Cosmic law.

RECTOR WISDOM. Oh, Oh, you poets!
(*Goes to the telescope.*)

GARDNER. (*following him*).
Get the Sophomores
Who did the hazing, coldly to dissect
Their consciousness to learn what prompted
them
To be unruly, and the length of time
They felt the influence. This they will do
Frankly enough, and with detail enlarged
As by a microscope, if what they write
Be privileged, and not used to their hurt.

RECTOR WISDOM. Well, but I have expelled them.

GARDNER. What! not others
Beside young Fowler?

RECTOR WISDOM. Every one concerned.

GARDNER. But you will take them back in time?

RECTOR WISDOM. Not one.
No discipline, no college.

GARDNER. Has the prize,
Offered to any youth who could invent
A deviltry his father did not play,
Been yet awarded? Will it ever be?
When we were Sophs and Seniors, did not
we

Make breaks from discipline and blaze
night long?

Were comets, Wis, fixed stars when we
were young?

Do you remember how we chloroformed
The proctor through the key-hole of his
room,

In answer to his prayer; "Let me have
peace,

At least for *one night* in the year?"

RECTOR WISDOM. Yes, but
Should manhood ride the nightmare of
his youth?

GARDNER.
No nightmare in this case, for, since our
time,
Brute force obliging freshmen to perform
The acts of menials and the freaks of loons,

Has been replaced by sane, ennobling rites.
Can you afford to check the great Reform?

RECTOR WISDOM.

I have determined to pluck up the practice
Of hazing, root and branch, and burn the
seed.

GARDNER.

A horticulture which the President
Of every College on the globe, has tried
Without a blooming product for his pains.
Now, throwing off the Rector, man to man,
Why be implacable in Fowler's case?
He was my guest that night from dusk to
dawn.

RECTOR WISDOM. (*slightly annoyed*).

His conduct subsequent to his expulsion, —
Inciting many others to rebel
Against authority, then leading them
In most disgraceful acts of violence
Against tradespeople in their right to peace
And the enjoyment of their property, —
Has justified my sternness, if extreme.
The light shows I walked straight, when
in the dark.

He is a dangerous youth. I had him
marked

For shipment, months before I sent him off.

GARDNER. Vicious?

RECTOR WISDOM. No, worse.

GARDNER. How worse?

RECTOR WISDOM.

Hairbrained. Why, he
Would fling a murderous, devastating bomb

Into the social structure, for the noise,
Or just to smoke a rat from out the wall.
(*Goes to the telescope.*)

GARDNER.

Now, not as bad as that! Young genius
rarely,

If ever, flings the pepper of his wit
In handfuls on the fire of righteous ire,
To set the world a sneezing, like the sea,
Out of sheer malice! 'Tis to clear the
heads

Of those who snuffle with the cold of cant,
That he repeats the trick he learned at
school.

RECTOR WISDOM. (*returning from the telescope
and searching Gardner with his glance*).

Paul, tell me why you are so interested
In that young man?

GARDNER. Because, Wis, his expulsion
May prove calamitous.

RECTOR WISDOM. To whom?

GARDNER. To you
And to Eureka.

RECTOR WISDOM. How?

GARDNER. Because his mother
May reconsider her bequest.

RECTOR WISDOM. His mother?

GARDNER.

Yes, Mrs. Fowler Bond, the lady whom
I represent in stablishing the Chair
Of Poetry, and other chairs as well,
To make Eureka foremost of the peaks
That catch the sunrise.

RECTOR WISDOM. (*agitated*).

How unfortunate!!

GARDNER.

The son, moreover, on the very night
The Colored youth was hazed, assured me
that,

In case the mother's sum did not suffice
To make Eureka's Chair of Poetry
The finest in the world, he would supply
The shortage, on the day he came of age.

RECTOR WISDOM. (*aside*).

Eureka's discipline at any cost!

Yet, yet, her needs are great. Ought I
head off

And kill a good upon its way to her?

(*A knock, and Fred Fowler enters with Rebecca Lovehart, to the amazement of the Rector*)

FOWLER. Good morning, sir!

RECTOR WISDOM.

Good morning! What is this?

FOWLER.

Are you the parson at the little church
Down in Eureka-ville?

RECTOR WISDOM. (*sharply*). Yes.

FOWLER. (*to Rebecca*). Bless the stars!

(*In this scene Rebecca talks little, partly because absorbed in thought on the events in the preceding act, but mainly because hers is a love that leans on her lover mentally and morally, with delight of the contact with the object of her affection rather than with the sense of weakness. She concentrates her gleeful eyes on Fred, wholly oblivious of the presence of bystanders, though*

not so obtrusively as to excite in them more than a smile in comment. She looks approvingly at whatever Fred says, or does, forgetting his disguise in her admiration, except when he attempts to kiss her, and her shrinking, then, is instinctive as in a dream.

(Gardner goes to the telescope.)

RECTOR WISDOM.

The Curate is in charge. You can see him

Tomorrow. I am busy.

FOWLER. Yes? — Your name

Is Hiram Wisdom?

WISDOM. Yes.

FOWLER. Your father, Seth,

Held forth in that same pulpit?—

RECTOR WISDOM. Yes, —

FOWLER. And Saul,

His sire, preceded him, and Absalom,

His father, was the founder of the church.

RECTOR WISDOM. You have my pedigree.

Well! What of it?

FOWLER. A problem that has kept me wake whole nights.

If there had never been an Absalom,

There would have been no Saul; and, if no Saul,

No Seth; and if no Seth, no Hiram; —

RECTOR WISDOM. (*curious*). True —

FOWLER. Then, how much Wisdom would the world have lost?

RECTOR WISDOM. (*smiling faintly*).

Well, what of it?

FOWLER. Just this — Bill Beelzebub,
My father's great grandfather, saved the
life
Of Absalom's good mother, when a girl,
And Absalom, attaining to the age
Of reason, pledged his word that he, or his,
Would, long as grass grows green and water
runs,
Wed, christen and inter the Beelzebubs
Without charge of a dollar.

RECTOR WISDOM. Oh, indeed!

FOWLER.

But do you think Bill Beelzebub accepted
That kindness, unconditionally? No!
He was a simple man, who, holding fast
To the fixed stars, left comets to the fools.
(*The rector straightens up*).

And so he answered; "Absalom! while you
And yours are true in doctrine, I accept,
On the behalf of my posterity;
And now I ask you, Sir, do you hold fast
To all the tenets that your fathers taught?
Or simply hold the ignorant to them
For sake of social order, and to save
A fine profession for its perquisites
From being one of the "lost arts?"

RECTOR WISDOM. (*aside*).

Well! Well!

Is this a knave, or fool? or maniac?
What do you want with me?

FOWLER. To marry us.

RECTOR WISDOM. Are there no clergymen else-
where?

FOWLER.

Not up.

They keep good hours. We were informed
that you

Spend every night carousing —

RECTOR WISDOM. What! —

FOWLER. Yes, sir, —

Carousing with the heavens, and would not
mind

An interruption —

RECTOR WISDOM. Misinformed! —

FOWLER. To help

A fugitive, with bloodhounds on his track, —
My dear one's dad and her three brothers.

RECTOR WISDOM. Oh!

Is this young woman white?

FOWLER. Yes.

RECTOR WISDOM. Is she dumb?

FOWLER.

Well, yes, *dumfounded*, Sir, though her
affliction,

The saddest possible to womankind,
Dates back now scarce two hours.

RECTOR WISDOM. Two hours!

FOWLER. Yes, Sir.

You look incredulous. Who would not
lose

The power of speech, a woman though
one be,

To learn, Sir, that the man whom she had
thought

Her father, was a fraud who, not content
With squandering her fortune, tried to
blast

Her life by forcing her to marry him
 Instead of me, her lover, true to death?
 This is a wicked world which men like you
 In the sky business, Sir, who keep aloof,
 Can bless the stars that you know little of.

RECTOR WISDOM.

How will I know, Sir, that she compre-
 hends

The grave importance of this step?

FOWLER. How know

That any bride does? They are all alike,
 Too much preoccupied with happy thoughts
 To think about the grave.

RECTOR WISDOM.

No levity. Her name?

REBECCA. Rebecca Lovehart.

RECTOR WISDOM. (*surprised*).

She can speak!

FOWLER.

Of course! Dumb persons now-a-days all
 speak.

They read the lips like posters on a fence.

RECTOR WISDOM. Remove your veil.

FOWLER. Hold on there, Parson! wait!

The ceremony first, and then the kiss.

You parsons always want to be prepaid.

RECTOR WISDOM. I must be sure she is not
 hypnotized.

FOWLER.

Is she so sleepy-looking, you require

An expert to attest she is awake?

Rebecca, raise your veil.

(*She removed it.*)

We have been joined
Already by an Alderman; but Beck
Does not believe an Alderman has power
Enough to pave and light the road to
Heaven;

Though, in most things, he may have pull
enough

To draw a mule from out its hide and
hoofs.

RECTOR WISDOM. Why don't you get your colored minister?

FOWLER.

I have my reasons, Sir. He disapproves
Of all mixed marriages. He says no good
Can come of them, except by way of fees
And therefore charges double.

RECTOR WISDOM. He is wise.

FOWLER.

Wise? No, Sir. He is Reverend Madison
Wells.

You know him, don't you? He's the colored
preacher

That, at the Great Alliance of all Christians,

Was hustled out at sight.

RECTOR WISDOM. You should get him.

FOWLER.

I would, were my dear bride as broad of
mind

As I am, Sir. You see, I don't object
To a white Parson; but she does to a
Black.

The women folks need higher education.

RECTOR. (*glancing at Fowler sharply*).

What is your occupation?

FOWLER. Mine, Sir? Oh!

'T is anything an honest man can do

With brawny hands and something of a
head,

And her's is teaching music.

RECTOR WISDOM. (*impatiently*). Oh!

FOWLER. "Oh!" Sir!

Were you to hear her, you would not say
"Oh!"

She plays by ear, by sight, and, as she puts
Her nose close to the sheet, I think by
smell.

RECTOR WISDOM. (*depreciatively*).

How can she play, when she is hard of
hearing?

FOWLER.

Oh! like Beethoven who, you know, was
deaf.

RECTOR WISDOM. Oh! sit down there. I shall
ring up the Curate.

(*Goes to the bell, followed by Fowler*).

FOWLER. Will not your Reverence perform
the Rite?

RECTOR WISDOM. I am engaged.

FOWLER.

What! Do you stultify

Your public utterance?

RECTOR WISDOM. What utterance?

FOWLER. That you would rather wed your
daughter —

RECTOR WISDOM. What!! —

FOWLER.

If you had one, and she would do your bidding,
To a good Colored youth of education,
Than have a Bishop, with Chinese dong-dong

For chasing evil, tie her to the scion
Of any of our White first families.

RECTOR WISDOM. Who dares declare I ever
made that statement?

FOWLER. The press says Curate Jones.

RECTOR WISDOM. What! — Just like him.

FOWLER. Do you repudiate the sentiment,
Or reaffirm it?

WISDOM. (*ringing the bell*).

I do neither.

FOWLER. (*to Gardner*). Sir,

We need a witness, — will you honor us?

RECTOR. I have rung up the Curate, wait him
there.

(*They sit aside and converse in the sign language.*)

GARDNER. (*whispering*).

Love plays strange pranks.

RECTOR WISDOM.

I cannot marry them,

For grief to them and theirs can but result.

GARDNER. If you cannot, how can the Curate?

RECTOR WISDOM. Oh!

He is a raw and simple fellow, Paul,

Who never had a scruple in his life.

He can perform the rite with a safe conscience.

GARDNER.

A handy fellow, Wis, to have about.

Yet, should Intelligence that treads the
heavens

From star to star, with Earth upon his back,
Transfer the burden to the swaying shoulders

Of Ignorance, that sprawls from cloud to
cloud?

FRANK MERRITT. (*dashing in*).

Save, save me, Rector! Barricade the door.

(*He locks the door and piles chairs and globes
against it.*)

RECTOR WISDOM. What is the matter?

MERRITT. Oh, a mob! a mob!

I saw them from my window.

GARDNER. Friend, be calm!

MERRITT.

They take me for a base Laocoön!

(*Alarmed at the sight of Fred and Becky, conversing energetically in the sign language, he jumps on the window-sill, but is caught and pulled back by Gardner.*)

GARDNER.

Hold on! hold on! How save you, if you
dash

Your brains out? There is no chance with
the ground.

Lie down here under cover and don't move.

(*He covers Merritt with the canvas and
spreads maps over him.*)

(*Three loud knocks.*)

RECTOR WISDOM. (*feebly*).

Who are you?

VOICE. (*outside*). Friends.

RECTOR WISDOM. What do you want?

VOICE. (*Outside*). Admittance.

GARDNER. Admit them?

RECTOR WISDOM. (*unnerved, and nodding negatively*).

Yes.

GARDNER

One moment, gentlemen.

(*Gardner removes the chairs and opens the door, whereupon Phelps enters with his Delegation uttering strange sounds and expressing themselves picturesquely with the sign language.*)

RECTOR WISDOM. (*amazed*).

Are these men dumb?

PHELPS. All delegations are,

Except the spokesman, Sir.

RECTOR WISDOM. Well, I declare!

What can this mean? Who let you up?

PHELPS. No one.

(*Hank Smith translates the succeeding dialogue into the Sign language for the benefit of the delegates who are demonstrative in their appreciation.*)

A freckled-faced, red-headed, glass-eyed chap

Objected, but our message was too urgent

To tarry longer than to deputize

A sub-committee to give him a hearing,

And to report to us, on our return.

RECTOR WISDOM. A rude procedure!

PHELPS. Not when you consider

The great importance of our errand, Sir.

Are you Eureka's President?

RECTOR WISDOM. I am.

Well?

PHELPS.

No, not Well, but Wells, Sir, Madison Wells.

A clergyman, not from the old man's choice,

Because the calling is respectable,

Pays well, and I am fit for nothing else;

But from the feeling that I have been
"called."

RECTOR WISDOM. What do you want?

PHELPS. We are the Delegation

Come from the Liberal Club.

RECTOR WISDOM. The Liberal Club!

You mean to tell me that its members, Sir,

Are —

(*Pauses*).

PHELPS.

Mutes? Decidedly. That fact is known

To every one who follows its proceedings.

RECTOR WISDOM.

That's surely news to me! Please state
your business.

PHELPS.

This Delegation from the Liberal Club

Has, as you must have seen in all the
papers —

RECTOR WISDOM. I have no time for papers.

PHELPS. You must sit

Sequestered from your epoch, then, which,
pardon

My frankness, quite explains why you know little.

Or nothing, Sir, about the Liberal Club.

RECTOR WISDOM.

My time is valuable! Please proceed.

PHELPS.

We come here to apologize most humbly
For the injustice done this institution
By Resolutions, passed at our last meeting
Upon the hazing of the Colored lad.

RECTOR WISDOM. I know not what your Resolutions are.

PHELPS. Permit me, then, to read them.

RECTOR WISDOM. No, no need.

PHELPS. Why?

RECTOR WISDOM. I accept the Club's apology.
(*Moves toward the telescope*).

PHELPS.

Wait, wait! I have a duty to perform.
You, surely, would not interrupt a man
Doing his duty? I have to declare
The members of the Liberal Club esteem
The Students of Eureka highly —

RECTOR WISDOM. What! —

PHELPS.

For having disregarded racial hue
In Merritt's case, and having treated him
Like every Freshman, since the days of
Adam.

RECTOR WISDOM. Well?

PHELPS.

No, not well, but Wells, Sir! Madison
Wells!

I don't like the last letter of my name
To be docked off, Sir, like a horse's tail.
I am on record as opposed to docking.

RECTOR WISDOM. Now that your duty is performed —

PHELPS. Not yet.

We were impowered to arbitrate with you
About the reinstallation of those youths,
Upon conditions, honoring all concerned.

RECTOR WISDOM. You try my patience! (*turns away*).

PHELPS. (*following him*). Wait, wait, Sir!

RECTOR WISDOM. (*peevishly*).

No time.

PHELPS.

Must old Eureka forfeit every laurel
And to oblivion, Sir, disintegrate?
Remember what Eureka owes to them.

RECTOR WISDOM. Owes them?

PHELPS.

Yes, Sir, owes them, and not alone
Eureka, but the world; for they uplift
Their fellow-beings, nay, rejuvenate
The human species.— Does that take your
breath?

RECTOR WISDOM. Well, I should think it does!

PHELPS. I thought it would,

But listen —

RECTOR WISDOM. Zounds, Sir!

PHELPS.

Where they go, they draw
The masses from the mud-fish life of toil
At counter, desk and anvil, bench and case,

To airholes, Sir, for hours, and give them
back

Their youth in all its wild exuberance
Of Spirit, heart and lung and jump of joy.

DELEGATES. Oo! Oo!

PHELPS.

So much, Sir, for the world; and now
Eureka's glory comes. Where can you find
The peer of Fowler as a sculler, Sir?
Who has not seen him on the Hudson's
tide,

Aye, twelve boat-lengths beyond the closest
shell,

With cheering throngs, like tanks of oil,
ablaze

In a high wind, on either hilly shore?
And then Jack Baldwin — "Baldwin to
the bat!"

Oh, when the City, emptying its crowds
Into the Diamond field, roars, roars and
roars,

As though it had Niagara for its lungs,
You know that Baldwin, with two out, has
struck,

And that he flashes round from base to base
To the Home plate, before the ball is found,
And that Eureka holds the pennon still!!

And oh! is there a College on the globe,
But would swap off its best Professor, nay,
Its President, for Phelps, the Football cap-
tain

Who may be driven to the hospital,
But never to inglorious defeat!

RECTOR WISDOM. You seem familiar with the Students' names.

PHELPS.

Much more than with the tutors, I confess.
Their names are known to fame; the tutors'
not.

The Students are alive, Sir, — are a part
Of their brisk epoch — while you know,
the tutors,
Entombed in their old College vaults, but
think

They live because their hair and beard still
grow.

RECTOR WISDOM. You have performed your
duty, I shall mine.

PHELPS. Good, bravo! They can want no
more than that.

RECTOR WISDOM. Than what?

PHELPS.

Than have you do your duty, which
Is to accord them judgment by their peers;
In short, a "Bill of Rights," or "Magna
Charta."

RECTOR WISDOM. Report back to your Club,
your errand vain.

CURATE. (*struggling at the door with the Sub-
Committee*).

Now don't excite me! Don't excite me!
Don't!

Let go, I know you bear me no ill-will;
Still, you may be the death of me. Hands
off!

I have to do my duty to the Rector.

PHELPS.

Don't get excited, Friend, but go down
stairs

And bathe your head with brandy; or, if
you

Have temperance scruples, bathe it with
chopped ice.

CURATE.

Let go, I give you all fair warning, that
I have heart trouble, and a poor lone aunt
With six grown good for nothings, all de-
pending

On me to pay the rent and get them clothes!
So don't excite me! don't excite me! don't!

RECTOR WISDOM. What is the matter?

CURATE. (*approaching*).

Rector, on the stairs,

When coming up in answer to your ring,
I overheard enough to warrant me

In stating these are your suspended Students,
And that this gentleman is coaching them.

Here is the money, fifty thousand dollars,
They tried to bribe me with. Here, take
it, Rector!

It burns my fingers!

RECTOR WISDOM. (*handing the paper back*).

That is no banknote.

PHELPS. (*assuringly*).

That? That is good as money. *That is,*
Sir,

The claim of Citizen George Francis Train
Against the British Empire for the sum
Of fifty thousand pounds with interest,

For one whole night's duress in dungeon
vile,

Duly assigned to Fenians for collection.

'Tis good as some Wall street securities

That qualify their owners as Grand Jurors,

Bank bolsterers, church pillars, and what

not

In Civic and in Ethical reforms.

(The Colored Delegates who have held their breath during the Curate's recital, discontinue the sign language and become restless, and the Rector eyes them sharply and displays amazement. The Curate hastens out frightened by his own temerity, but is intercepted by Fowler who beckons with one hand to his bride).

FOWLER.

Hold on, young Curate! Don't have us to
chase

Till morning for a parson.

RECTOR WISDOM.

I forbid it.

(The Curate stands agog).

Are these the expurgated Students, Paul?

GARDNER.

Yes, and they have been truly expurgated;

I found them boys and I return them men.

RECTOR WISDOM. Audacity without a parallel!

GARDNER.

It happened just this way. I saw the herd
Stampeding, and I knew that, if I tried
To stop them short, they would make pulp
of me.

I saw my only chance to lead them back

Where they belong, was to swing them
around

By way of glory.

RECTOR WISDOM. Glory?

GARDNER. It is glory

To have chastised Eureka's slanderers,
The vile defamers of its President,
Its Faculty and Students, in a manner
To be remembered.

RECTOR WISDOM. By a negro farce?

GARDNER. Consider that, if they have smoked
their features,

Like glass, it was that we might look through
them

At Freedom in its Northern obscurity.

RECTOR WISDOM. Paul!

GARDNER. They have brought the Colored
problem home

To the *whole Nation*, in a playful way.

RECTOR WISDOM. (*flaring*).

What! Has it come to pass, Paul Gardner!
that

Eureka has erupted smoke and lava
To make a Pompeii of Gettysburg
And all the other battlefields, now sacred?

GARDNER.

No, but Eureka has sent up a light
Which, howsoever it may startle many,
Is worth the Country's heeding; for it shows,
The North's love for the Black is hollow
cant.

RECTOR WISDOM. What good can come of
showing that?

GARDNER. Great good,
I fancy, if it wake and disabuse
The Black Race of false hope, and urge it
on
To the development of its own powers,
The culmination of its own ideals,—
The Star seed sown by God, — the only
means
By which a tribe can thrive to its perfection.
(*The Students applaud*).

RECTOR WISDOM. Young men, retire.
(*He goes to the telescope, followed by Gardner whispering*).

GARDNER.
How throw away the chance
Of establishing the comet origin
Of some of earth's disorders, maybe all?

PHELPS.
Nothing now left us but philosophy
Which, with unbroken smile — you know
the rest. —

STUDENTS. "Meets each and all vicissitudes of
life."

(*The Rector lifts his hand nervously and holds it aloft, without withdrawing his eye from the instrument.*)

GARDNER. The President wants you to wait.
(*Silence for a few seconds*).

RECTOR WISDOM. (*with radiant features and in his great joy forgetting the present state of affairs*).

Look! Look!

GARDNER. The Comet!

RECTOR WISDOM. Look! First magnitude!
GARDNER. (*after observing the comet*).

Great! Great!

Most wonderful in all historic time!

Congratulation.

(*Shakes the Rector's hand*).

RECTOR WISDOM. (*with effort to remain calm
in the hour of triumph*).

This pays me for the years

That friends have smirked, and those not
friends, have smiled,

When mentioning new comets in my pres-
ence.

FOWLER.

My dear one never saw a comet, Sir, —

Will you oblige her?

RECTOR WISDOM.

She may look.

REBECCA.

How cute!

A beauty! Why it wears its tail like bangs!

RECTOR WISDOM.

It was the squirrel tail that, curling over
The head, obscured the face from me so
long.

I was correct in every calculation,
Except in the position of the tail.

GARDNER.

Eurekians! Salute your President,
Whose great discovery will make Eureka,
Your Alma Mater, famous for all time.

STUDENTS. (*forming a diamond*).

Eurek! Eurek! Eureka! Ha! Ha! Ha!

Eurek! Eurek! Eureka! Ha! Ha! Ha!
Eurek! Eurek! Eureka! Ha! Ha! Ha!

GARDNER.

Oh, I could die this moment, such my joy,
Such peace mine with myself and all the
world,

If I were the discoverer, old boy,
Of such a comet! Tell me how you feel
In this, your hour of triumph. I must
know; —

'T is worth recording.

RECTOR WISDOM.

Paul! Oh! I could grasp
The whole world up and just cry, look!
look! look!

PHELPS. Come fellows! look! the President in-
vites.

*(The students take their turn at the telescope,
their sense of humor being subdued by their awe
at the great discovery.)*

GARDNER. What will you name it?

RECTOR WISDOM.

I suppose The "Squirrel,"
Being descriptive.

GARDNER. No! Call it Eureka.

STUDENTS. Eureka!

RECTOR WISDOM. Well! Eureka it will be.

(The Students applaud.)

GARDNER.

Inform your President that no discourse
Of his at Chapel, but will bear large fruit
In your careers; that you espouse with
zeal

His inculcation, that the college man
Should lead in all the movements of the
world
And, with his culture, shape the Epoch's
course.

STUDENTS.

'We pledge our lives, our fortunes and our
honor,
To that high purpose; we shall do our
part.

GARDNER. Assure your President that you
have plucked

The hazing habit from the College grounds
Forever, and will gladly burn the seed,
When you are granted trial by your peers.

STUDENTS. We so assure him.

GARDNER. (*to Rector Wisdom*).

How commemorate
Your glorious discovery to-night,
By act more fit, and one, too, that will show
This comet's influence is most benign?

RECTOR WISDOM. (*After hesitation*).

Young men! Report to-morrow at the
Chapel.

GARDNER. Without exception?

RECTOR WISDOM. (*After a pause*).

Yes, without exception.

FOWLER. Will the good Rector now perform
the rite?

RECTOR WISDOM. Now, who are you?

FOWLER. Fred Fowler.

RECTOR WISDOM. Oh! I now
Catch the full purport of your parable!
And, truly you have placed me in your
debt.

A change comes over me. Its suddenness
Is not like lightning from the azure sky,
But like a flash from clouds, long gathering.
You have rid me, Sir, of a load borne long
With awful overstrain and inward wince,
And oft, scorn of myself. Do I hold fast
To all the tenets that my fathers taught?
No!! I have wanted to say this for years,
But it, somehow, stuck always in my throat.
I thank you for the question, that has
drawn

The bone out, and let me breathe freely.

GARDNER. (*tearful with emotion*).

This

Is the Discovery worth chronicling!
How I congratulate you that, at last,
You sight the most resplendant orb in
heaven,

Which every man discovers for himself,
Or, else, goes color-blind through rich-
hued life, —

The orb of Mental Freedom! Here, two
hands,

On both your grand discoveries to-night!

(*Gardner takes the Rector's both hands and
shakes them vigorously*).

FOWLER. (*escorting Becky and lifting both the
pearl and catseye rings*).

Good Rector, we are ready.

RECTOR WISDOM. Sir, ablution

Before a rite so sacred.

BECKY. (to Fowler). I am glad!

(The Students spell out the Rector's name, and Merritt jumps to his feet, scattering the maps.)

STUDENTS. W — I — S — D — O — M.

Wis-Dom.

(They reiterate "Dom" like the beat of drum, and drag Merritt, the curate, Fred Fowler, and Rebecca into line on their parade of triumph. They march out, followed by the curate who, from his sense of duty to the Rector, must be around to see what is doing. Rector Wisdom goes to the telescope and Gardner approaches Fred and Rebecca.)

GARDNER.

You have not introduced me to your bride.

FOWLER. Beg pardon. Miss Rebecca Lovehart.

GARDNER. (in surprise). Lovehart?

FOWLER.

Yes. Lovehart! Lovehart! Now recant! recant!

Recant your heresy within her hearing!

"One cannot marry Art and Woman both
And hope for heaven on earth."

GARDNER. (to Rebecca). Oh, yes! Fred can.

FOWLER. A whitewash now for mine, while
you two chat.

(Exit).

GARDNER. Have you lived in Eurekaville?

REBECCA. I think

That it was there my mother died.

GARDNER. Long since?

REBECCA.

Good many years. All I recall of her
Is that her face was white and cold as
snow,

When I was raised to kiss her, the last one,
Before the Sexton shut the coffin lid.

GARDNER. May I ask, what was her first
name?

REBECCA. Naomi.

GARDNER. No! No!

REBECCA. (*sighing*). I only learned her name
to-night.

GARDNER. (*aside*).

No, not my foolish, yet withal beloved,
My dream of rare elysian loveliness
That vanished, soon as seen, and left me
to stand

With vacant vision and a vacant life!

REBECCA. Fred, I suppose, told you the cir-
cumstances.

GARDNER. (*dazed*). He told me something.

REBECCA.

Such things, are of course,
Not of much interest to strangers, Sir.

GARDNER. (*gazing at her*).

Her mouth, her brow, her dimple, eyes
and hair,

And the swan-like erectness of her mien,
When floating on the quickly rising lake
Of admiration, fed by every eye!

Oh, my imperious swan, at thought of
whom,

I nightly hailed the stars, in lingering
dream:

“Bright brood of boundless space! ye that
alone

Can body forth my pure, eternal love,
By reason of your manyness and splendor,
Be ye the flock to follow her for aye.”

REBECCA. Of whom, Sir, are you speaking?

GARDNER. Oh, of one

That, born to grace the smaller lakes of
life

With her white loveliness, and only them,
Became an eagle's mate, and when she
lacked

Wing strength to soar, drooped, till her
long fair neck

Sank and grew tangled with the lilies'
stems.

God! that this should have been. Yet
whose the blame?

The eagle's surely, for with sight as keen
As lightning, and as pervious through all
flocks

That scud along the heavens, he should
have known

The swan cannot be other than the swan,
A creature of calm water. Still, not blame,
But pity is the solvent of the faults

And follies of this life. Let it dissolve

Mine with the others. Oh, the more I gaze,
The more Naomi! She, who, scarce three
months

After our marriage, left my house, refused

Again to see me, and, without Court order,
Cast off my name.

REBECCA.

She must have had some reason
For such strange conduct.

GARDNER.

Yes, a woman's reason.
She thought me mad because of my contempt

Of little social functions, teas and dances,
All well enough for those who can be apes.

REBECCA. A woman's reason may not be astray
As far as man's, that goes a seeing apes
Among his civilized acquaintances.

GARDNER.

"Mad" to surrender to ennobling Art,
My brain, heart, soul, day, night, year in,
year out,

As every artist must, who would not fail;
"Mad" to believe a man with eagle wings,
Should not be dragged from heaven and
darkly cooped

In low ambition, where the church, the
press,

Law, politics, are all one hungry scramble
For the earth's vomit, gold! "Mad" to
believe

A wife should not bear down with her dead
weight

Upon the husband, but should vault with
him

Up to the sun, the gathered geyser lights
Of all things knowable, or thinkable,

Smoothed out and rounded to a perfect whole,

And be content not with a meaner perch
For the survey of life. It was expecting
Too much, I know. Oh, could she re-
appear —

But she does reappear in you, my child!
Look in mine eyes, my daughter!

REBECCA. (*murmuring*). Can this be?

GARDNER.

They are as wild with infant wonderment
And baffled understanding, as your own.
Life's mysteries make infants of us all.

(*Goes to caress her*).

REBECCA. (*drawing back*).

Oh! tell Fred this. 'Till he says it is so,
I can't believe it. How could you have
been

A lifetime learning such a simple thing
As that I am your daughter, if I am?

GARDNER. —

I heard dear, of your birth, and that you
lived

Only an hour. Believing what I heard,
For Pighead, the attorney of your mother,
Was my informant, I went West, prospect-
ing.

Oh, all the gold in Colorado's hills,
If it fell crashing, like a cataract,
Shaking the world with its increasing
thunder,

Could not have drawn me, as could have
one tress,

Dear, of your yellow hair, if I had known —
(*Breaks down*).

Oh, I shall choke the explanation out
Of that vile wretch, before to-morrow
noon!

REBECCA.

Tell Fred what you tell me; for my poor
head

Is turning round so fast, it can't stand still
To know one thing from another. Fooled
for years,

I place no faith in any seeming thing.

Tell Fred this strange, strange news; his
judgment, mine.

GARDNER.

Naomi, but with eagle wings for flight
As lofty as her husband's! Oh, God bless
The both of you. God bless you both.

FOWLER. (*entering with washed face and joy-
ous voice*). Amen!

Say, have you gone on with the ceremony
Without me? Is the groom of no account?

REBECCA. (*throwing herself in Fowler's arms*).

Oh, Fred! Fred! Fred! Thought you
would never come.

FOWLER. (*after kissing her*).

No finer relish, than a loved one's kiss,
To give a man an appetite for life.

What! a long face, and tears? Beck, you
are right,

Be in the style. What girl can really feel
She is a bride, except she wears a face
As long and as tear-sprinkled as her veil?

Which, by the way, you have not yet, but
will

To-morrow morning with your whole trousseau,

From Macy, or some other Yankee Worth.

RECTOR WISDOM. (*coming from the telescope*).

Well,— but a moment. Is the bride of
age?

FOWLER. Yes.

RECTOR WISDOM. Let me see her birth certificate.

FOWLER. We never thought of that.

RECTOR WISDOM.

Sir, "never thought"

Digs many a grave and fills almshouses.

GARDNER.

Is the certificate an absolute need, Rector?

RECTOR WISDOM.

Well, yes, it is. The girl is very young,

And, as you see, below the average

In intellect and sense.

FOWLER.

Off track, old man! —

Mean Rector.

RECTOR WISDOM.

Judging, too, from her changed looks,

I fancy that she has begun already

To realize that haste in matrimony,

Is fraught with peril.

REBECCA. Oh! not that, not that

The cause of my unrest and growing chill!

RECTOR WISDOM.

Besides, I think 't is time we ministers,

Who cry against divorce and raise our hands
In horror at its awful inundations
With wrecks of homes, as far as eye can
reach,

Should stop the flow of evil at its source,
The overhaste of youth; that we should
save

Young people from the worst of foes —
themselves —

Where possible. I, certainly, must have
Her birth certificate, or, else, the proof
Of the consent of either of her parents.
Have you the proof of such consent?

FOWLER. (*glumly*). No.

GARDNER. Yes.

Her only living parent gives consent.

RECTOR WISDOM In writing?

GARDNER. No, in person, I am he.

This is a night of great discoveries;

The Comet, Rector, yours; a daughter,
mine.

There is a Power, that in mysterious ways,
Shapes happiness for every human heart;
And, if it clap rough hands across our eyes,
Blindfold us for awhile, 't is but to turn
Us round, at moments when we least expect,

To show its face of love and see us smile.

(*The Rector and Fowler, astounded, stare at Gardner, and Rebecca fixes her eyes on her lover's features for confirmation of her father's discovery*).

(*The Students outside are heard shouting the*